Evaluating the Effectiveness of Team Building Training:
A Case Study of a Management Team undergoing Team Building Training

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DECLARATION

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A CASE STUDY OF A MANAGEMENT TEAM UNDERGOING TEAM BUILDING TRAINING

I hereby declare that I am the legitimate author of this Long Essay/Dissertation/Thesis.

I further confirm that this work is original and unpublished.

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Abstract

Team building training within companies and organisations has become highly useful and practically essential for businesses to be successful as it helps colleagues understand each other better and maximise their full potential. The aim of this study was to establish a better understanding of the effectiveness of team building training, by evaluating the team building process of a Maltese management team. A qualitative approach was adopted: a sample of eight participants responded to a semi-structured interview. Thematic analysis resulted in 25 basic themes that were organised under four major themes, namely: the team building process; the team’s weaknesses; aims for training and outcomes of training. The findings suggest that team building training is effective in improving team-bond, communication, role-clarification and common direction.

Keywords: Team building, Training, Management, Case Study, Thematic Analysis
“A fractured team is just like a broken arm or leg; fixing it is always painful, and sometimes you have to rebreak it to make it heal correctly. And the rebreak hurts a lot more than the initial break, because you have to do it on purpose.” (Lencioni, 2002)
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Thanks to Patrick who introduced me to the book, “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” and guided me through the initial stages of my dissertation process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Due to the nature of the work in today’s organizations, most productivity occurs in groups and teams (Salas, Stagl, & Burke, 2004). In fact, teams have been researched since the 1920s, and team building training has increased in popularity in the 21st century workplace. There exists a vast amount of research regarding team building training. However, it is felt that there is still limited understanding of the benefits of training, particularly in Malta.

1.2 Motivation for Researching Training

Having worked in teams before, I have always been fascinated with the way different personalities come together to work as one team, using their various strengths to complement each other in the work they do as one unit. My desire to find out how people can work more efficiently continued to push me towards this research. After attending a ‘Train the Trainers’ course abroad and carrying out my own team building training session to a student organisation, my interest in training grew and this led me to ask various questions. I wanted to explore what characteristics are needed to make a team building training programme truly effective; whether there is one formula which fits all or whether each team is different.

After reading Patrick Lencioni’s book entitled ‘The Five Dysfunctions of a Team’, I was truly inspired and felt that training could really make a difference to any company if carried out correctly. It was this that helped me decide that my study would focus on team building training and the benefits it may have on the team.
1.3 Aims of the Study

The research question adopted for this study is: ‘Does team building training have a positive effect on teams?’ The aim is to outline the main variables that contribute to the success or failure of a training programme, as well as to delve into the realities of a Maltese management team working in a highly competitive industry. This is done by analyzing the team members’ personal accounts of the way the training programme is affecting them.

1.4 Outline of the Study

Subsequent to this introduction, chapter two reviews relevant organizational literature on training, more specifically research on team building training. Chapter three describes the qualitative methodology chosen to collect and analyse the data for this study while the following chapter is a discussion of the results in relation to the literature previously reviewed. These findings are split into four global themes and their descriptions are supported by thematic networks, including a comparison to the relevant literature. This chapter then concludes with an outline of the study’s limitations. Lastly, chapter five finalises this study by stating the implications of this study and recommendations for future research.

1.5 Conclusion

This case study focuses on the experience of a Maltese management team as they progressed through their training programme which was specifically tailor-made to their needs. The next chapter will review the relevant international research found, regarding team building training.
Chapter 2: Literature Review: The Effectiveness of Team Building Training

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on the effectiveness of team building training. Before delving into team building training, one must first understand the nature of teams in the workplace as well as what makes an effective team. In light of this, one can now explore the various models of team building training as well as the team building process.

2.2. The Nature of Teams

Teams have existed since the very beginning of time, dating back to our ancient ancestors who first grouped together to hunt, raise families and defend their communities. As the history of man developed, a common feature throughout human history is teams of people working together for a common purpose. Yet, this came to a halt in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when large organizations developed a modern concept of work, taking a more individualistic approach (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Work was represented as a collection of individual jobs, where companies believed in departmental segmentation and pyramidal structure. However, survival and growth of organizations has become more and more challenging along the years and it is being argued that the most effective solution to such a complex and competitive environment is to bring people of varied strengths and capabilities together to work as one united team (Gupta, 2009). This would ensure more rapid, flexible and adaptive responses to the unanticipated problems. Thus these challenges have pushed hierarchies out and pulled teams in! (Durcan and Oates, 1994; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Gupta, 2009)

Ever since teams became the dominant structure in organisations, the research on teams has increased both in terms of quantity and content. Teams and groups have been an important
part of Organisational research as early as the 1920s. In fact, the powerful impact of groups on the organisation’s effective functioning in the workplace was first formally recognized in the human relations literature by Elton Mayo (Liebowitz and De Meuse, 1982). Recently, the area of teams and team performance has flourished and there is now a voluminous amount of literature available on the topic (Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2010).

2.2.1 What is a Team?

The term ‘team’ has been defined differently numerous times by various people. One of the simplest definitions of teams is that they are a unique type of work group, consisting of two or more individuals, responsible for achieving a goal or objectives (Gibson et al., 2011). Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) combined past research to form one complete comprehensive definition of teams: (a) Two or more individuals who (b) socially interact (face to face, or increasingly, virtually); (c) possess one or more common goals; (d) are brought together to perform organizationally relevant tasks; (e) exhibit interdependencies with respect to workflow, goals, and outcomes; (f) have different roles and responsibilities; and (g) are together embedded in an encompassing organizational system, with boundaries and linkages to the broader system context and task environment.

The main aspect of a team that is emphasized by various scholars is the need of a common goal. In fact Lencioni (2002) states: “If you could get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time.” (p. vii)

2.2.2 What is an Effective Team?

After defining what a ‘team’ is, research goes into further detail by distinguishing the characteristics of an ‘effective team’. Klein et al. (2009) argued that building effective teams
requires top-level commitment and specific, clear and mutually agreed upon goals; management-employee trust and involvement; willingness to take risks and exchange information; and time, resources, and a dedication to training. Whereas, Gilley et al. (2010) synthesized past research to create a list of competencies (skills, knowledge, and attitudes – also known as SKAs) that team members need to develop in order to establish the foundations of an effective team. These competencies include conflict resolution, problem solving, communication, organizational understanding, decision making, goal setting and performance management, and planning and task coordination. Moreover, members of effective teams are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and have the ability to change when their performance needs improvement (Dyer, 2007).

Furthermore, team effectiveness can be enhanced by limiting the number of members, having a clear agenda, training members together at the same time and place, minimizing links in communication and setting clear performance goals (Driskell et al., 2006).

2.3 The Need for Training

As previously mentioned, the industry is becoming more competitive and challenging, resulting in organizations world-wide investing in the idea of introducing teams into their workplace, therefore, there is an increased need for organizations to optimise their teams (Shuffler et al., 2011). Managing a group of people with diverse backgrounds and skills could be a complex task, since each member of the team would have a different perspective on any problem or issue (Gupta, 2009). A common problem is that employers often assume that employees already know, or can easily learn along the way, the competencies they need to be effective at working and learning in teams – but past research and experience shows that clearly this is not the case (Vernon, 1999). The truth is teams are inherently dysfunctional because they
are made up of imperfect human beings, however, team building training attempts to identify those dysfunctional ways and develop various solutions for overcoming them (Lencioni, 2002).

2.4 Definitions of Team Building Training

Just like the term ‘team’ has countless definitions, ‘team building’ has also been defined in several different ways in research. This section links together various definitions found in previous research, ultimately formulating one clear definition.

Team building was originally a group-process intervention designed with the intention to improve interpersonal relations and social interactions. It is considered to be a process which gives members the chance to take a short break from their daily work in order to spend time together assessing the effectiveness of their interaction and identifying aspects of group functioning that tend to diminish effective group effort (Reece & Cooper, 1980). Team building is considered to be a very resourceful intervention as it can be used in various situations, such as, in order to a) strengthen an existing team, b) establish a new team, c) re-form a team after a re-organization, or d) improve interfaces among several teams (Liebowitz & De Meuse, 1982).

Over the years, team building has evolved to include the achievement of results, the meeting of goals, and the accomplishment of tasks besides the original aims to improve interpersonal relations and social interactions (Klein et al., 2009; Shuffler et al., 2011).

2.4.1 Purposes of Team Building

The aim of team building is to create superior and highly efficient teams in organisations world-wide, increasing organisations’ ability to respond quickly to change by improving decision making and problem solving skills within team members. Team building ensures self-development, promotes positive communication, and encourages effective leadership. Team
building also provides a healthier work environment by motivating employees to work in teams, creating interdependence between team members. A team building intervention also enables team members to understand their own strengths and weaknesses as well as their colleagues’ strengths and weaknesses – enhancing the ability to work closely together to solve problems (Gilley et al., 2010). Team building is said to be most effective when targeting teamwork breakdowns and specific problems within the team, such as lack of cohesion or trust (Shuffler et al., 2011).

2.5 Models of Team Building

In the past, there was no clear agreed-upon definition of team building in research, resulting in a lack of consistency in the articles chosen for reviews. It became apparent that team building would need to be split into four distinct models rather than grouped up under one term, since team building interventions may vary according to the needs of a team. This would also make research more constructive since one can focus on one model rather than try to evaluate all four. Therefore team building currently consists of four agreed-upon approaches: (a) goal setting, (b) interpersonal-relationship management, (c) role clarification and (d) problem solving (Klein et al., 2009; Shuffler et al., 2011). Although they are classified separately, combinations of these approaches are common since actual team building interventions rarely rely on one model alone. This is because improving team effectiveness usually requires consideration of more than one problem area.

Patrick Lencioni (2002) established a model that addresses five main criteria that can alter the effectiveness of a team’s performance, which basically combines all the above four models. Lencioni’s model is aimed to be used as a guide for managers to improve their team according to the needs of the team by assessing which dysfunctions they suffer from most. The five dysfunctions are: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of
accountability, and inattention to results. Even if one dysfunction is present, the team deteriorates – which is why Lencioni forms this assessment (Lencioni, 2002).

2.6 The Team Building Process

Team building is an ongoing process, rather than a single event. Many people have an incorrect idea of team building by considering team building as a one-off activity where one takes a break from daily work to ‘do team building’, but then returns to work doing business as usual. Whereas in reality, team building allows teams to systematically evaluate and change the way the team functions (Dyer, 2007). These changes are made through several months or years rather than in a couple of days. There are always new ways to improve team performance, which is why team building is an ongoing process that every team should engage in (Dyer, 2007). In the following sub-sections the steps in the team building cycle will be briefly explained, as presented by Dyer (2007).

![Team Building Cycle Diagram](image)

*Figure 2.1: The Team Building Cycle*

2.6.1 Data Gathering

Before the training, data is collected in order to determine the root of a problem. If there is no evident problem, data would still be collected in order to understand which issues are most important to address in order to improve the team’s performance levels. Data collection is done
either through surveys, interviews, or team data gathering (Dyer, 2007). There are various standardized surveys which teams can take in order to understand their team, for example the Team-Building Checklist or the Team Maturity Scale (Dyer, 2007), or the Team Assessment found in Patrick Lencioni’s book (2002).

The manager, together with the trainer, should decide which method is the most effective way to gather data about the team, whether through surveys, interviews, or open data sharing. This is frequently determined by the size of the team, the level of trust in the team, and what kind of information is needed (Dyer, 2007).

2.6.2 Data Analysis

Data is then analyzed in order to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of the group, noting especially problems which may adversely affect the group’s effectiveness (Liebowitz and De Meuse, 1982). It is through a careful analysis of the data that the team as well as the trainer may understand certain procedures, rules, or job assignments that may be causing a number of disruptive conditions. It is then the team itself who identifies and prioritizes the issues and problems that need to be addressed in the team building intervention (Dyer, 2007).

2.6.3 Action Planning

Since it is through the team’s data that the problem is identified, it is also up to the team to decide what actions to take in order to solve the problem at hand. This is obviously guided by the consultant who helps the group look at its interactions including the team’s problem-solving and work processes. Together with the trainer’s guidance, the team establishes a set of new team objectives and various actions to be worked on throughout this process (Dyer, 2007).


2.6.4 Implementation

In this step, the actions planned during the off-site team building session are put into practice when team members return to the workplace. This is the phase in which one can evaluate whether the change necessary is actually happening, as team members must try to avoid their old way of doing things in order to increase team effectiveness by replacing the old with the new solutions developed by the team itself. It is in this stage that commitment to the programme is of utmost importance in order to make the effort worthwhile (Dyer, 2007).

2.6.5 Evaluation

There are several forms of evaluation. The evaluation framework developed by Kirkpatrick (1967) is probably the most widespread method which involves four levels of data collection: 1) reaction, 2) learning, 3) behaviour, 4) results (Arnold et al., 2005).

The evaluation period is the point at which the manager together with the consultant observes whether the actions planned and the goals developed during the team building sessions have been achieved. This step involves carrying out follow-up team building sessions or further data gathering. It is here that the team can review its own progress as well as address other problems which may have recently surfaced. Evaluation is a very important step, since one must determine whether or not the change has been ‘refreezed’ or not (Dyer, 2007). The term ‘refreezed’ is referring to the last stage in Kurt Lewin’s model of change which he in fact refers to as ‘freezing’. It is at this stage that the new changes have not only been accepted but they have replaced the old customs and became the norm.

The team building process is described as a cycle because the information gained through the training evaluation paves the way to improve future training activities by creating a
continuous feedback system. (Arnold et al., 2005)

2.7. So is Team Building Training effective?

“Training effectiveness goes beyond evaluation. It involves identifying what affects learning before, during and after training” (Bunch, 2007, p.144). Past studies have found difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of training, especially team building training, since there are so many variables that need to be considered and that can affect the overall effectiveness of the team. Klein and colleagues (2009) evaluate the impact of team building on team outcomes by reporting the results of 20 studies. Through this they found that all four approaches of team building have a moderate effect on outcomes, with goal setting and role clarification being the strongest of them all. Additionally, it was found that team building played an important role on affective and process outcomes. However, a main criticism of these 20 studies in question is that there was no attempt to separate the effects of team building from other interventions that may also be occurring within an organization. Although generally this can be a common problem for field research, it is even more challenging in the team building area of training research (Klein et al., 2009).

However, scholars continue to come up with more conclusive ways to assess team building, in order to identify what characteristics are found in effective interventions in contrast to failed interventions. Establishing such criteria is of vital importance since failed interventions waste immeasurable time and money, as well as promote the growing scepticism about the value of organizational change efforts, thus contributing to the persistent underestimating of the training profession (Bunch, 2007).

Bunch (2007) recognizes four reasons which cause a training intervention to fail: (a)
unskilled practitioners provide flawed interventions; (b) skilled practitioners provide flawed interventions because they do not have the power or influence to design a valid program; (c) skilled practitioners provide valid interventions, but learning does not transfer to the job; (d) skilled practitioners provide valid interventions that produce positive transfer, but effectiveness is not perceived. A large amount of literature regarding training effectiveness focuses on training design, content and evaluation. Therefore, there is substantial knowledge of the failure which results from unskilled practitioners. Conversely, there is little recognition of the deep-rooted values, beliefs and assumptions that people have which ultimately prevent effective training (Bunch, 2007).

Team building training repeatedly gets misused and belittled as a team development intervention because it is often not designed suitably, but as shown by the empirical literature presented by Shuffler and colleagues (2011) it can have a positive impact if done in the correct way.

2.8 Conclusion

This section outlined the literature found on the effectiveness of team building training. As shown, team building is an ongoing process rather than a single intervention. It hits on numerous variables which make it harder to assess whether it has been effective to the team or not. This study attempts to contribute to already existing literature by providing an in-depth analysis of a Maltese management team undergoing a team building training.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological design implemented in this study. A description of each step of the research process is given, including the selection of participants, the data collection, and the analysis. The chapter concludes with the ethical considerations and limitations of the study, as well as its validity and reliability.

3.2 Qualitative Methodology

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular team building training programme, which was tailor-made for a team of managers. A case study approach was deemed the best way to analyze such a team throughout its ongoing process of their training programme because it enables the researcher to have a detailed and holistic view of the team’s characteristics both before and after the training sessions. This was originally planned to be done through semi-structured interviews with the eight managers, as well as the two trainers who delivered the programme, however two participants were unable to be interviewed due to lack of availability. Short observations of the sessions were also carried out and were used to gain familiarity with the team and the training, but were not analyzed systematically as part of the research methodology. Surveys (see Appendix A) were given to the managers in a pre-test/post-test format and the results (see Appendix B) were then used as prompts during the interviews. By retrieving information from multiple sources, as well as different perspectives, that is both the trainers’ and the managers’ perspectives, the researcher was able to make an in-depth examination of the team’s behaviours (Creswell, 2003). Results were then analysed using thematic analysis.

Qualitative methodology was considered most suitable for the current research topic
because team building training has many aspects and variables to consider. Therefore such methodology allowed the gathering of diverse valuable data to better understand the concept from numerous perspectives. This resulted in a research which is not only of intrinsic value to the particular team under study but is also significant to other companies since it demonstrates that team building training is indeed effective in improving team communication and developing team skills.

3.3 Participant Recruitment and Selection

The search for a team undergoing a team building training programme was not an easy task. After contacting various training companies as well as large firms that would most likely invest in such training programmes, eventually a team was found that fit the profile perfectly. A Maltese training and development company replied to my request and explained that they were currently working with a management team on a team building programme implemented across six separate sessions, which matched my research question flawlessly. The management team is part of company that provides fire, safety, security, environment and marine solutions. Therefore the team is made up of people with diverse skills and different roles, all of whom come together in order to achieve the best possible results for the company. The training programme was implemented in order to improve their performance and management skills as one whole team.

In the beginning of this research, this team was made up of seven people. However, after the third session, one of the team members resigned, and later on two new members joined, resulting in a team of eight people. After conducting all my interviews, another member also joined but since she had not yet been to any of the training sessions, she was not included in this study. This change of people in the team made the current study even more realistic since teams are constantly evolving and having to adapt to such changes, as previously stated in the literature
reviewed (Shuffler et al., 2011).

The training sessions were delivered by two trainers, who sometimes delivered the session together or else alternated depending on the topics. Both trainers were to be included in the study with the purpose of employing a more holistic approach to this evaluation; however one trainer dropped out of the study due to lack of time in his schedule.

3.4 Interview procedure

For the purpose of this study, eight semi structured interviews were carried out which lasted between 30 to 60 minutes each. One interview was carried out with the trainer who delivered the training programme while the other seven respondents were the participants of the programme, all of whom are managers of a company forming part of the same team. The interview guide was tailored accordingly (see Appendix C).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen in order to acquire as much information as possible by giving the respondents the space to talk freely about the team’s interaction, reassuring the respondents that all information would be kept confidential. The questions were open-ended to encourage the respondents to elaborate their views about the topic (Landridge, 2004). Prompts were also employed to guide the participants to further expand on any relevant themes (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009).

3.4.1 Interview guide

Before carrying out the interviews, a survey (see Appendix A) was conducted with the team before their third training session and the same questionnaire was answered for the second time by the team members following their sixth training session. The questions in the questionnaire were then used as prompts in the interview, in order to compare the results
received from the questionnaire with the information gathered from the interviews, creating a triangulation of data. Other questions were also asked during the interviews, which were developed after having read enough literature about the subject to be able to guide the interview in the right direction. Doing this would allow the comparison between the similarities in the literature and the results extracted from the semi-structured interviews.

The order of asking the questions depended on the participant’s interests and concerns, as the interviewer let the interviewee talk about his/her opinions in a spontaneous manner rather than dictating the questions in the order of the interview guide (see Appendix B). So essentially the participants played a crucial role in how each interview was shaped (Lyons et al., 2007). However, the interviewer also played an important role. In fact Smith and Eatough (2007) suggest that a good interviewer would offer the participant a ‘gentle nudge’ by probing the interesting areas that arise which are relevant to the research question. Throughout the eight interviews, I tried to stick closely to the same set of questions and behaviour, in order to enhance reliability of the study.

3.4.2 Interview setting

The interviews were carried out at the participants’ workplace. This was because all of the participants have very busy schedules, so it was necessary to work around their schedules in order to find the best possible time for them; this ensured that I will have their undivided attention.

Before the interview, a summary and clarification of the study was given to ensure a full understanding of the purpose of the interview. I explained to each participant that should they wish to withdraw from the research at any point they may do so without having to give an explanation. It was also clarified that the questions were prepared in English; however they could
speak in Maltese if they felt more comfortable.

Throughout the interviews, eye-contact was maintained to show that I was interested in what they were saying and thus promoting an open, flowing conversation. Appropriate non-verbal communication is vital to a successful interview. In fact, I often found myself nodding or giggling whenever the interviewees mentioned something I agreed with (Langdrige, 2004). I ended each interview by asking the participants whether they felt they had anything else to add or clarify, to make sure that they have said everything they thought was necessary.

The fact that the participants were being recorded, acted as a barrier within the interview setting, especially when the respondents had something negative to say about the company or one of the other team members. In such situations, reassurance of confidentiality and anonymity in the research was provided, reminding them that the tape would be deleted after finalising the research. This helped generate a feeling of safety in the interviews (Langdrige, 2004).

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Thematic analysis (TA)

Thematic analysis is considered to be highly suitable for team research since it is not limited to a specific theoretical framework thus allowing greater freedom to identify, analyse and describe patterns of data which are relevant to the research question (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Therefore TA was the qualitative method of analysis chosen for this study.

Thematic networks were used to depict “the salient themes at each of the three levels” and illustrate the relationships between them (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.388). This is a simple technique for breaking up the text into web-like maps, which can be easily understood by the reader at a glance (Attride-Stirling, 2001). It is important to note that TA is a recursive process,
in which the researcher moves back and forth as needed, throughout the phases of analysis. Therefore, this process should not be rushed, but rather developed over time (Braun and Clark, 2006).

3.5.2 Procedure of analysis

After conducting the interviews, each interview was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The first step in TA is to reduce the data by coding it. The procedure of analysis began by repeatedly evaluating the transcriptions and separately analysing them to put together the initial codes. These codes were then compared, and the common codes were assembled to identify the themes. These basic themes were then organised and clustered together to form organising themes. Further grouping deduced the organising themes into the final global themes that summarise the data. Thematic networks were then drawn up for each global theme, simplifying the explanation and exploration of each theme (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

3.6 Ethical considerations

Before the start of this study, institutional authorisation had to be obtained. This was given by one of the company’s directors who approved that the research can be conducted on the managerial team of the company.

The participants were given an information sheet (Appendix D), prior to the interview, which outlined the research’s aims and informed the participants fully. In order to have a written confirmation of the participants’ acceptance to participate in the study, they were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix E) which informed them of their rights as participants. The consent form stated that at any stage in the interview they could decline to answer any question. They were assured that the recording of the interview will only be used for research purposes and will
be destroyed at the end of the study. All rules within the consent form were followed throughout the study. Furthermore, the names of the respondents as well as names of those they referred to during the interview have been changed. This secured the anonymity of the participants and ensured that nothing could be traced back to the participant.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

In order to maximize the validity of this research, the researcher used respondent validation by sending the interview transcriptions to the participants prior to the analysis, ensuring that they agreed with what had been said. This also provided them with the opportunity to revise the questions and add any other comments they had forgotten to mention. Furthermore, all the interviews were carried out in a location suggested by the respondent, ensuring that they were in a setting where they felt comfortable. The time the interview took place was also decided by the respondent, to avoid imposing on their work schedule; guaranteeing that they will be focused on the interview rather than appointments they would be missing.

I sometimes repeated their answer to confirm that I have fully understood what they wanted to say as well as by asking similar questions to ensure validity in what they are saying.

Transcribing the interviews myself enabled me to increase my familiarity with the data which made the next step in the analysis easier, that is, coding the data. During the analysis process, none of the steps involved in thematic analysis were rushed, in order to be as consistent with the literature as possible (Patton, 2002).

3.8 Limitations

It must be noted that the data gathered may not be fully reliable since the participants could have answered my questions with what they think I want to hear rather than with their
honest opinion. My questions slightly changed as the interviews went on, because I was slowly getting to know the team better, so the questions became more specific.

Another limitation was that one of the team members was not interviewed, due to unforeseen circumstances. Also, although two trainers delivered the programme only one was interviewed, due to the lack of availability of the second trainer. Thus not carrying out these two interviews limited the information gathered about the preparation, design and delivery of the programme. Also the fact that one person resigned and two new people joined the team during the training programme may have had an effect on the results of the course. One must also consider that there is a new member in the team who has not attended any training sessions yet, and who was therefore not interviewed.

The fact that the study was conducted over a short period of time restricted the amount of interviews conducted which proved to be a limitation since the researcher was unable to reach a level of saturation, which would be the ideal situation in such a study. Theoretical saturation is achieved when no new or relevant properties surface from the data and each category is well established. Therefore, this study was “not fully developed in terms of density and variation” (Corbin & Strauss, 2007).

3.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to give the reader a clear picture of the processes involved in producing this study. By carefully outlining the method of data collection and analysis used, one can understand how the researcher came to the results and conclusions which will be discussed in the following chapters.
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results gathered from the data analysis in light of the relevant literature which was previously reviewed in the second chapter. The themes are presented through thematic networks, accompanied by their descriptions. The limitations of the study will conclude this chapter.

4.2 Thematic Networks

At first, 25 basic themes were identified in the data. These were then clustered into 12 organising themes which were further organised into the following four global themes: the team building process; the team’s weaknesses; aims for training and outcomes of training. A summary thematic network (see Figure 4.1) and a table of themes (see Appendix F) were drawn up, providing a simplified outline of results. More thematic networks as well as direct quotes from the dataset will be used to support the description of the themes presented.

Figure 4.2: Thematic network: Summary
4.3 The Team Building Process

This theme outlines the process of the training programme, starting with collecting the data and analysing it, moving on to the implementation of the action plan, and ending with an evaluation of the whole process (see Figure 4.2). One may note that the steps that this particular training course followed are the same steps in the team building process presented by Dyer (2007).

![Thematic network: The Team Building Process](image)

*Figure 4.3: Thematic network: The Team Building Process*

4.3.1 Data Gathering & Data Analysis

*One-to-one meeting.* One-to-one meetings were carried out with each member of the managerial team as a form of gathering data which is the first step in Dyer’s team building cycle (2007). All the participants described this meeting as their initial introduction to the programme, in which they spoke to the director of the training company and sometimes one of the trainers who delivered the sessions also observed the one-to-one meetings.
“We talked to him freely, what our problems are, individually...” (Participant 6)

Many things were discussed such as:

“Problems, situations, what is our view about the company, what is the best to do in our opinion for the future...” (Participant 3)

The trainer explained the goals of carrying out these one-to-one meetings:

“The objective of the one-to one was to get to know them, to introduce ourselves ... to tell them why we are there, what we aim to achieve together but also to have an opportunity to know what’s hindering them from performing.” (Trainer)

**Feedback sessions.** The respondents explained that the first two days of the training programme were two full days of feedback, in which the whole team was present and “everyone unloaded” (Participant 1). Together they discussed:

“...Things about each other that we could improve, complaints about the system... things that bother us both in respect towards each other and within the company environment.” (Participant 5)

Both the one-to-one meetings and the feedback sessions enabled the trainers to design these sessions specifically for the management team. Conducting such a needs analysis before designing a training programme is essential in order to design it in ways which guarantee that the needs are met and thus ensuring a valuable training. In fact, a training that is not directed to the specific needs of the individual and the organisation can be counteractive and worse than no training at all (Arnold et al., 2005). The trainers in this study indeed followed these steps towards creating a tailor-made programme; their actions will be discussed in the next sub theme.
4.3.2 Action Planning & Implementation

*Specifically tailor-made.* After gathering enough information the trainers discussed the outcomes with the directors of the company, so as to merge both the directors’ vision for the company as well as the managers’ ideas. This corresponded with Dyer’s (2007) reasoning that top-management should take responsibility for the team building programme and that the team itself should play an important role in identifying the issues that should be addressed in the training plan. The trainers further understood the team by having one-to-one sessions with other employees to learn more about the managers.

The directors also attended separate training sessions, giving the trainers a more holistic view of the company:

“...We’re learning what is their (the directors) vision, their strategy and direction, then we translate that into...back to work actions to get the management team to eventually embark on initiatives to get there” (Trainer)

This provided the trainers with the adequate information to specifically design the programme for the team and throughout the interviews it was clear that this made a big difference to the team:

“It is customised, it is built around what we are doing, and the trainers don’t just come with a presentation, they are studying our operation, our way of doing things, they are getting into the detail and then preparing the training, so the training is really orientated on what we are doing so it’s very effective.” (Participant 4)

*Dipping approach.* The fact that the sessions were spread out across a couple of months, rather than all packed in one week gave the team members enough time to absorb the knowledge.
they gained as well as to test that knowledge at work. In fact the programme was designed to include “one day of training and then three weeks of back-to-work actions” (Trainer) in which the managers had to implement what they had learnt into their everyday work routine. In his interview, the trainer labelled this as a “dipping approach.”

Afterwards, the next session would begin with a discussion evaluating the success of the back-to-work actions. The participants spoke highly of this design: “It gives you some time to reflect, try, explore, and see if it works...and then go back and discuss again” (Participant 4). Commitment to the programme is of utmost importance in this implementation stage in order to make sure the effort and time invested into this programme was worthwhile (Dyer, 2007).

The team members were asked about their opinion of dedicating a full day to the training session rather than a few hours, and the general feedback was positive since one is able to concentrate more.

“You say this day is dedicated to learning and that’s all, so your mentality is relaxed and you pick up a lot more things.” (Participant 6)

**Off-site.** The structure of the session seemed perfect for the team. They all appreciated that it was done off-site, since this created a better learning environment with no interruptions or distractions. In fact Participant 5 stated that “the environment makes you relaxed and more open to learning,” leading the team members to be more focused and concentrated.

The fact that they were allowed to dress in casual clothing was also mentioned by a few of the participants as they considered it to play a part in the effectiveness of the sessions:

“…even that you’re dressed in a relaxed way, automatically your mind would be open to
new ideas.” (Participant 7)

Within the literature, the reason why team-development programmes are usually delivered off-site is because if people met in their workplace, they would struggle with switching from their everyday work problems to focusing on learning and concentrating fully on the goals of the course (Dyer, 2007; Lencioni 2002).

### 4.3.3 Evaluation

**Positive feedback.** During the interviews, all the participants spoke highly of the training programme including the delivery and attitude of the trainers. No one had any complaints, and all of them said they would definitely recommend it to everyone they know.

“It was one of the best trainings I’ve ever had with this company... it’s an eye opener on how to do things correctly.” (Participant 4)

“It was interesting and I felt that I learnt more in this course than I learnt at University” (Participant 1)

The trainers used various methods to acquire the managers’ feedback such as a flipchart where the team was asked to mark their level of satisfaction with the programme. Open discussions after each session were also a form of receiving feedback, as well as surveys. All feedback obtained was again highly positive and encouraging.

However, it is important to note that such feedback is not proof that the training was successful in achieving its aims because participants may be enthusiastic about the programme simply because it was a break from everyday work routine. This type of evaluation is considered to be of a reaction level according to Kirkpatrick (1967) evaluation framework which was previously
described in chapter two. Although asking trainees for their comments is often the only type of feedback collected, such feedback has been dismissed as ‘happy sheets’ (Arnold et al., 2005.) In fact, the Trainer himself admits that this type of feedback is “cosmetic”.

**Ongoing process.** Although the best way to evaluate the success of the training is to measure the changes implemented at the workplace, this was not possible at this stage since the team is still going through a journey of continuous learning and results cannot be achieved overnight.

“This is a journey and it does not only depend on what they actually manage to do, it depends on their support, their teams and so on; one will have to see as we move forward” (Trainer)

Most of the managers believe this should be an ongoing process because they know that there is a lot more to be learnt.

“I think we have already achieved quite a lot of knowledge but I think we are still half way so it does not make any sense to stop anything now.” (Participant 5)

This last step of the process, the evaluation, is a determining factor of the success of the programme since one must establish whether or not the change has been ‘refreezed’ (Dyer, 2007). The managers expressed that they have improved both as a team and individually regarding their management skills, however, they admitted further changes can be made and much more ‘refreezing’ is needed, and therefore this development training needs to be an ongoing journey.

In this programme, more evaluation is needed regarding how the skills supposedly gained in the
training have been transferred to the workplace. This is because one can only know if training is useful if we evaluate its success. One must keep in mind how costly such programmes are, so ensuring that the training is beneficial is highly significant for the organisation (Schumaker, 2004).

4.4 The Team’s Weaknesses

The management team is not perfect. The participants reported several weaknesses that they believe their team suffers from such as preferring to work individually; unproductive meetings and conflict (see Figure 4.3).

![Thematic network: The Team's Weaknesses](image)

\textit{Figure 4.4:} Thematic network: The Team's Weaknesses

\textbf{4.4.1 Working individually vs. working in a team}

\textit{Departmental}. Most of the participants commented on the fact that most of the managers prefer working individually and “are more focused on each department,” (Participant 1), rather than working together as one whole team. Even when speaking about themselves some confess to this individualistic characteristic: “I don’t like to depend on others. I’m that kind of person”
(Participant 3). Nonetheless, there are times when “issues have to be resolved with other departments” (Participant 2). It could be the case that their work environment does not support teamwork which is important for a team to be successful (Humphrey, 2000).

This departmental attitude is a known problem, which the company is trying to resolve:

“It’s been being addressed for years now...but it’s not a small change, cause it is being cascaded down to all the field employees as well and to try and bring down that situation and get it back to where we want it today, is not an easy thing, but it is improving.” (Participant 4)

In fact Darmanin (2005) states how new organizational structures are being created today in which boundaries between departments are being reduced or eliminated. The trainer also mentioned how this was something that was incorporated into the training programme:

“We wanted the company to go on that level, to have common directions ... if I leave my department alone for a while and I go to yours, to support you for whatever you’re doing and give my resources for you to be successful as well, so that is the type of the mentality that I feel we are arriving at.” (Trainer)

4.4.2 Unproductive meetings

Another weakness is that the management meetings have a tendency of being unproductive, in which “you go there and you say I wasted 2, 3, 4 hours.” (Participant 3)

*Macro vs. Micro.* A few of them believe the reason for this is because they focus on micro issues rather than macro:

“Sometimes we lose direction, because sometimes we discuss the nitty-gritties and I think...
management meetings should be discussing macro issues not micro issues.” (Participant 5)

**Problem solving and Decision Making.** Another problem that was discussed in the interviews is the lack of ownership when discussing a problem. Decisions are never made, leading to the same unresolved topics being discussed in every meeting:

“Usually you waste a lot of time on the same subject and the same subject comes again the next meeting... And sometimes we decide something in the meeting and then after a week or after 3 days they decided to do a different solution.” (Participant 6)

“There is no one to take that decision or everyone says ‘I try mine and you try yours’...everyone like his own company.” (Participant 2)

Although each team member is portrayed to be highly committed and passionate about their job, their lack of teamwork has led to a lack of commitment to decisions as well as the avoidance of accountability. These being two of the dysfunctions that Lencioni speaks of in his book ‘The Five Dysfunctions of a Team’ (2002), in which he comments that a team that does not commit to clear decisions creates ripple effects among the subordinates.

Further literature was found regarding the importance of “the collective belief that all members were part owners.” (Druskat & Pescosolido, 2002, p.291). It is through such collective ownership that team actions and outcomes fall under the team’s responsibility rather than only one member’s authority. This encourages team members to take pride in the team’s decisions (Druskat & Pescosolido, 2002).

**4.4.3 Conflict**

**Disagreements.** The criteria for successful teams are that the team is clearly identified, its
tasks are clear and distinct, the team members have control of their task, and there is a real need for the team. Therefore it could be the case that conflict arises because of unclear tasks or goals, and lack of control that the team members have (Humphrey, 2000). The conflict between the managers seems to be the result of conflicting short term goals across the departments, which may cause friction within the team:

“"My vision may be to keep growing for example but their vision might be to keep giving an excellent service which is good ... so there might be some friction in the sense that while I would want to get in more business they would want to keep the business.””

(Participant 5)

The level of conflict seems to increase when the managers are in contact with their directors:

“Most of the time we were in conflicts with the directors instead of with each other” (Participant 2). The reason for this could be that the relationship between the managers and the directors has not yet evolved as well as the relationships among the managers of the departments. In fact it was suggested that the directors attend some of the management training sessions.

However conflict is not necessarily a down fall. In fact, Lencioni (2002) states that conflict is productive and contrary to the view that teams waste time and energy arguing, those that avoid conflict actually create more problems by having to repeatedly revisit issues without resolution. On the other hand, the attempts to resolve conflict seem to be inconsistent, in which the team either takes an extreme “submissive” approach, or an “aggressive” approach (Participant 7).

Artificial Harmony. Participant 7 thinks that the team fears conflict and tends to hide any misunderstandings rather than confronting each other.

“We’re not being open about the issues. We’re politely tackling it, like sending emails or
doing a phone call ... But it's not always good...sometimes you need to get it out in the open and then move on. .... I mean you argue with your family, you argue with your friends... it’s part of the relationship” (Participant 7)

Both artificial harmony, as well as any obstinate domination may cause equally harmful and unproductive results.

4.5 Aims for Training

Empirical literature shows that team building training was originally considered to be an intervention designed to improve interpersonal relations (Reece & Cooper, 1980). However, team building is much broader than that and can contribute to several other factors such as, the achievement of results, the meeting of goals, and the accomplishment of tasks (Klein et al., 2009; Shuffler et al., 2011). In fact, several needs were addressed during this training programme rather than just the team-bonding aspect, such as, management skills, team communication and setting company goals. These needs were drawn up from the training needs analysis previously mentioned, which enabled the trainers to create specific aims and objectives of training. Training aims give a clear portrayal of what the participants should be capable of doing at the end of the training. (Arnold et al., 2005)

The main goals of the training were perfectly summarized by the trainer:

“...to improve their levels of skills as senior managers... to improve their business management skills and also their strategic thinking... to cause the team to work together as a team... to enable ... common direction and eventually then to be able to cascade that direction towards their departments” (Trainer)

The aims for this training programme can therefore be split into three needs, namely the
individual level, the team level, and the company level (see Figure 4.4). These are comparable to the three levels of need analysis mentioned by Arnold and colleagues (2005) namely 1) organization, 2) job/task and 3) person.

4.5.1 Individual Level

**Self-development.** Several exercises regarding leadership styles and personality as well as tools such as a blockages survey were used to give the managers chance to evaluate themselves. Such questionnaires and exercises helped them understand themselves better. Many of the respondents said that seeing their faults on paper, even when they already knew they had such difficulties, gave them the drive to work on improving themselves by changing these weaknesses. Focus on the individual development of the team members may be in reaction to a specific organisational need to determine whether a group of individuals possess the appropriate skill levels needed for the job. (Arnold et al., 2005) As previously mentioned, Gilley et al. (2010) created a list of competencies known as SKAs or KSAs (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) that team members need to have in order to create an effective team.
Time Management. Time management training usually consists of two basic steps. Firstly, by guiding participants to become aware of which goals are personally important and evaluating how they are currently managing their time to achieve these goals by identifying their current work routines. The second step is prioritizing these goals, making an appropriate plan and self-monitoring their daily routine (Eerde, 2003). The training programme under this study followed these steps using tools such as an interruptions record and time management sheet. With these materials the managers evaluated how they spend their time and are finding ways of how to use their time more effectively.

“I’m measuring minute by minute every day. I’m listing down a daily time-log of everything I do...And I’m also having a separate interruption sheet with all the daily interruptions... So that is helping me judge where I can improve or if the structure needs to be improved to help me manage my time better.” (Participant 5)

“I’m more concerned about what I’m doing, is it useful? Is it needed? Is it beneficial for the company?” (Participant 4)

Management skills. Most of the managers grew within the company therefore many of them do not have management qualifications:

“When you see their career path, most of them have worked their way up, and they didn’t have any exposure to management training, except a few... So sometimes they are limited on that aspect.” (Participant 7)

As noted in literature, managing such a group of people with diverse backgrounds and skills is a complex task, since each member of the team would have a different way of dealing with an issue (Gupta, 2009). Therefore, this course was aimed at improving their individual management
skills so that the managers would have equal knowledge and skills about management, resulting in a better flow in the functioning of the company.

This training programme gave them the opportunity to learn the theory aspect of management, which they can then implement in their work to improve their management skills. They were taught “how a manager should really tackle the issues, what we should be doing in terms of delegating, planning, discipline...” (Participant 7)

All the team members expressed that the management tools they were given throughout this programme were highly beneficial to their work. Although better management skills are an individual need, it also benefits the rest of the company:

“...so it’s going to help all the managers around and if we’re all going to be better managers, we’re going to affect our teams and the other ones around us.” (Participant 4)

4.5.2 Team Level

Team building. The trainer described how the session was designed in a way to give the team time to bond in fun ways, whilst still improving their management skills.

“We’re causing the team to start working together but we’re introducing different exercises which initially would be nice to do and fun to do but then we started; we’re already doing exercises which lead to higher level of performing teams.” (Trainer)

As previously mentioned, it is important to remember that team building is not simply a fun day out of work, but that creating this bond will enable a team to work better with each other.

Personal relationships. Participant 1 explained that because the team does not know each other well, they tend to doubt each other or even blame each other when things go wrong.
However, if they knew each other better on a personal aspect, they would probably be a bit more hesitant to hold that person responsible since they would trust the person more. The training course has helped this lack of personal communication:

“You can understand a bit more about that person, where he’s coming from, what’s behind his character.” (Participant 3)

The trainer explained what a feat this personal sharing was for this particular team:

“They started sharing and that was a huge step forward because the team at work they definitely have no time... to have lunch together and speak together .... They are also sharing personal information together as human beings now, not as managers, to get a team together from an emotional aspect.” (Trainer)

In summary, the training programme created a relaxed environment in which the team felt safe to engage in positive communication with each other as well as to self reflect (Gilley et al., 2010).

**4.5.3 Company Level**

*Common Goals & Vision.* Training interventions should be linked with strategic plans, by examining the aims and objectives of the organisation, in order to establish an effective training (Arnold et al., 2005). On a company level the goal of the training under study was to present the team with the vision and aims of the company in order to ensure that everyone is on the same page, and working in one direction. However, there is room for improvement in this area:

“I know my goals and where I am going, maybe sometimes higher goals of the company are a bit blurred...sometimes they are not that clear.” (Participant 4)
This is something that is being dealt with in the training programme, but it is again not a change that can happen overnight:

“We know what the vision of the directors is and it was explained as well in the course. It was dealt with and we know what we are after ... but it’s not easy reaching it.”

(Participant 6)

**Structure.** A problem within the company that came out in a few of the interviews is the fact that there are no clear guidelines or regulations of how things must be done:

“I don’t think the weakness is within the individual but within the structure.... there is no structure in place that says listen, before doing this, you have to consult with this person.”

(Participant 2)

In conclusion, this team building training was indeed a combination of the four agreed-upon approaches mentioned previously. These are: (a) goal setting, (b) interpersonal-relationship management, (c) role clarification and (d) problem solving (Klein et al., 2009; Shuffler et al., 2011).

### 4.6 Outcomes of the Training

Before the first session, everyone was a bit sceptical of the training programme and the managers thought it was “just another training, just to zip your mouth” (Participant 2)

Throughout the interviews, it was clear that their initial expectations were soon forgotten as the training programme began to produce positive outcomes, mainly regarding the motivation of the team members, the bond between the team, and also their level of management skills (see Figure 4.5).
Figure 4.6: Thematic network: Outcomes of the Training

4.6.1 Motivation

*Increased motivation.* Participants expressed a high level of motivation the day after the training:

“I leave the lesson with a very ‘let’s get it done’ attitude.” (Participant 5)

“We were motivated again... there’s light at the end of the tunnel.” (Participant 2)

In general the sessions have indeed increased the motivation to work harder individually as well as the motivation to work as a team. This corresponds with research which states that team building provides a healthier work environment by motivating employees to work in teams, creating interdependence between team members. (Gilley et al., 2010)

*Decreased motivation.* However, the level of motivation does not remain so high forever:

“The day after every session your hopes were to the sky, and then the second day it goes
The same regression of motivation was also noted in Reece and Cooper’s team building case study (1980). In this case, it was suggested that participants should remind themselves of the team building principles they have learnt in order to achieve optimal results.

### 4.6.2 Team Building

**Team-Bonding.** The social aspect was very important to the programme, because they never had this sort of time to be together as a team to discuss issues in a calm environment. According to the participants, the aim to bring the managers together as one team was successfully transmitted:

“*It broke the ice that was between us.*” (Participant 1)

“*It brought us more together.*” (Participant 5)

**Communication.** The training sessions have improved the communication between the team:

“*Since the training sessions, we’re talking more, we’re expressing ourselves more and I think everyone benefits from all that.*” (Participant 6)

The course has enabled the team members to understand their own strengths and weaknesses as well as their colleagues’ strengths and weaknesses, thus making it easier to work closely together to solve problems. (Gilley et al., 2010)

Participant 6 continues to explain that through this communication, the team is moving away from being departmental because:
“...now they have realised, because it’s not my problems, but they are common problems in all departments. So now they talk more freely, they know that it’s not just their problem.” (Participant 6)

All the participants acknowledged the improvement that has been made amongst all the managers regarding communication and management, which they believe is the result of the training programme.

4.6.3 Management

Managing department teams. The managers explained that with the management skills they gained through the programme, they are able to manage the teams in their departments more effectively.

“It helps you to restructure your team, your office team so that if you’re not here, if you’re abroad or on leave or whatever. They can still deal with it.” (Participant 3)

Sessions with directors. A suggestion that many of the managers brought forward was combining the training sessions so that the managers and directors would attend a session together:

“I think there could be this improvement that there could be training sessions with the directors together, instead the directors on their own and the managers on their own.”

(Participant 2)

The majority of them agree with having separate sessions at first, in order to allow people to speak freely, however the last few sessions should include the directors so that everyone can make sure they are on the same page.
4.7 Limitations of the Study

There is great need for researchers to examine the results of team building over the span of the team’s life rather than at only one particular point (Klein et al., 2009). This study attempted to investigate the team over a period of time. However, it must be noted that this study is merely a snapshot of the team’s progress. This is because it has been decided that their training programme will continue and at this point there is still no end date. The extension of this programme is due to its great success and beneficial contribution to the company’s structure and performance.

It must also be noted that because the training session made sense for this team; it does not necessarily mean that all teams will have the same response, since there are several variables that must be considered when testing the effectiveness of such a training programme. This particular team building training programme has many variables which contribute to its success, such as the team’s willingness to learn and lack of resistance to change.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the themes that were brought out from the participants’ responses using thematic networks and in association to the literature already reviewed in chapter two. This was concluded with the study’s limitations. This chapter is followed by the conclusions of this research, including the implications of the study and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by reflecting on the knowledge gained from reviewing relevant literature and conducting my own research which led to my recommendations for future research.

5.2 Implications of this study

This was a valuable learning experience which I would like to share with others in order to eliminate people’s misconceptions of team building training. This is because such false impressions usually lead to the downgrading of the importance of such training. The main outcomes of this study have been to illustrate that team building training is not simply a day away from work taking part in fun activities, for example building a raft as a team, but in fact there is more depth to team building training when merged with theoretical aspects meshed with time for discussions and sharing of experiences. It also emphasizes that when employees are given the opportunity to show their strengths and develop their full potential, it is not only the individual who stands to benefit, but also the company. Therefore, this study serves as a reference for those who wish to invest in team building training, but are unsure of its outcomes.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Through carrying out this research, and by acknowledging the limitations and implications of the study, I am able to recommend possible future research on team building training, especially in the local context.

A more conclusive study would have been achieved had the participants been interviewed again after a longer period of time in order to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the
programme. Interviewing the directors of the company and perhaps even their employees would provide a more holistic view of the structure and the way the company functions.

Observing the full training sessions would enable the researcher to understand exactly what went on during each session. This would allow the researcher to fully analyze and evaluate each activity carried out during the course, in order to understand what it takes to deliver a successful training programme.

Testing the development process of one team does not answer all questions about organizations and teams because every team is vastly different. Perhaps analysing several different training programmes would further enrich current research, by understanding the different methods and techniques that could be applied. Another recommendation would be to administer the same team building training design to two different teams, in order to compare the way two different teams reacted to the same sessions.

5.4. Conclusion

After hearing such positive feedback from such a dedicated, hard working and passionate team, I can confirm how important team building training is for every type of team. This particular training created the opportunity for the directors to understand their employees better thereby improving their capacity of utilising the managers’ respective strengths even better. Organizations will benefit greatly if they invest in suitable training programmes, since such training will give their employees’ the chance to flourish while encouraging the continued positive development of the company.
References


Appendix A: Team Assessment Survey

The management team were asked to fill in this survey twice: once in the beginning of the programme and once after the 6th session. This survey is found in Patrick Lencioni’s book ‘The Five Dysfunctions of a Team’ (2002) and it is used to assess a team before designing a training programme for them.

Instructions: Using the scale below, indicate how each statement applies to your team. Please briefly evaluate the statements without over-thinking your answers.

3 = Usually 2 = Sometimes 1 = Rarely

1. Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.
2. Team members call out one another’s deficiencies or unproductive behaviours.
3. Team members know what their peers are working on and how they contribute to the collective good of the team.
4. Team members quickly and genuinely apologize to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or possibly damaging to the team.
5. Team members willingly make sacrifices (such as budget, turf, head count) in their departments or areas of expertise for the good of the team.
6. Team members openly admit their weaknesses and mistakes.
7. Team meetings are compelling and not boring.
8. Team members leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions that were agreed on, even if there was initial disagreement.
9. Morale is significantly affected by the failure to achieve team goals.
10. During team meetings, the most important—and difficult—issues are put on table to be resolved.
11. Team members are deeply concerned about the prospect of letting down their peers.
12. Team members know about one another’s personal lives and are comfortable discussing them.
13. Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.
14. Team members challenge one another about their plans and approaches.
15. Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out those of others.
Appendix B: Survey Results

The results of the survey shown in Appendix A were collected using the tables below in which each statement focused on one particular dysfunction and was categorized accordingly. Each dysfunction should be analysed separately and the results are to be interpreted in the following way:

A score of 8 or 9 is a probable indication that the dysfunction is not a problem for the team.

A score of 6 or 7 indicates that the dysfunction could be a problem.

A score of 3 to 5 is probably an indication that the dysfunction needs to be addressed.

**Participant 1**

**Pre-Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust</th>
<th>Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict</th>
<th>Dysfunction 3: Lack of Commitment</th>
<th>Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of Accountability</th>
<th>Dysfunction 5: Inattention to Results</th>
</tr>
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**Post-Test**

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<th>Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust</th>
<th>Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict</th>
<th>Dysfunction 3: Lack of Commitment</th>
<th>Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of Accountability</th>
<th>Dysfunction 5: Inattention to Results</th>
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Appendix C: Interview Guides

Two interview guides were used for this study: one for the trainer and the other for the management team. These guides were split into 6 sections: the first includes general questions whereas the other five sections focus on the five dysfunctions of a team as presented by Lencioni (2002). These guides include possible prompts that could be administered during the interview. These questions were not followed in a very strict manner or in the same order but were simply used to direct the flow of the interviews.

Interview Guide for Trainer

Section 1: General

1. How did the process of these training sessions begin? What preparation did it involve?
2. How well did you know this team before conducting the training?
3. Did you observe them in their natural work place before the training?
4. What were the main goals and aims for this training?
5. How was the purpose/objective achieved?
6. Were ALL members present during all the sessions? Did any miss out? If so, how did this affect the team and the training session?
7. Did you change your original plan/design at any point?
8. How did the resignation of one of the members in the team affect the training and the team?
9. Were there any problems working with this team? Are there any issues/characteristics that they suffer with? Were any of these problems aimed to be fixed/resolved?
10. Did you notice any difference in the team as the training sessions progressed?
11. Was the company happy with the results of the training? Do you think the actual team felt it was beneficial to them?
12. Would you say the training was ‘successful’ for the company? Did the training achieve its aims?
13. Do you follow-up such team-building sessions? Or did the training just stop there?
Section 2: Absence of Trust

14. Do you feel the team felt comfortable with each other and knew each other well? Did they trust each other?
15. Were the training sessions aimed at improving the level of trust between the team members? How? (What sort of activities/tasks?) Do you think it was successful in doing so?
16. Did you tackle the topic of feedback in the training sessions? If so, how?

Section 3: Fear of Conflict

17. Do you think that conflict can be productive? For example, when there is a disagreement between team members which results into an argument or heated discussion – is this healthy or unhealthy for a team?
18. Or do you feel this team avoids such arguments in order to keep the harmony within the team intact?
19. Did you tackle the issue of conflict in the training sessions? If so how?

Section 4: Lack of Commitment

20. Why do you think commitment is important for a team?
21. Do you feel there is a high level of commitment in this team?
22. Did you talk about the direction of the team (vision, mission, goals and aims) during the sessions?

Section 5: Avoidance of Accountability

23. In your opinion, does this team feel comfortable with holding each other accountable? Do they call out one another’s deficiencies or unproductive behaviours?
24. Is it clear what the team needs to achieve, who needs to deliver what, how everyone must behave in order to succeed? Were these issues dealt with during the training session?

Section 6: Inattention to Results

25. Do you think the team is easily distracted or are they focused on results?
26. Did you carry out any tasks/activities which dealt specifically to attention to gaining results?

(How functional is the team now? Are the 5 dysfunctions still present?)
Interview Guide for Senior Managers

(What is the individual’s perception of the company before and after training, as dysfunctional or functional? Have the training sessions made any difference– have things changed within the team?)

Section 1: General

1. What is it like to be a member of this company? How does it feel?
2. What is your role in the team? What department are you in charge of?
3. What do you think is your main contribution to the team?
4. Do you feel the team works well together?
5. What are the team’s strengths?
6. What are the team’s weaknesses?
7. What was your initial thought when you were told about these training sessions? Whose idea was it to invest in such sessions? Do you think it was necessary for the team?
8. Were there any problems or concerns you felt needed to be dealt with during the sessions? Were they tackled? If so, did it help the team?
9. Did it make a difference that the training sessions were carried out off site?
10. Did you look forward to the training sessions or did you see them as a waste of time?

Section 2: Absence of Trust

11. Do you feel you need to put up a front or act in a careful manner around the group? Or do you trust the group and feel comfortable enough to be yourself?
12. Do you think the training sessions improved the level of trust between the team members?
13. Do you ask for help from your team members or do you prefer doing everything by yourself?
14. Do you give feedback to each other? Positive or negative? Is negative feedback taken well or are grudges created?

Section 3: Fear of Conflict

15. Do you think that conflict is productive? For example, when there is a disagreement between team members which results into an argument or heated discussion – does such an argument end on bad terms or does it create a productive idea for the company?
16. Or do you feel team members avoid such arguments in order to keep the harmony within the team intact? Do you feel conflict creates more tension rather than unity between the team?
17. Do you feel the most important issues are discussed during meetings or are meetings boring and repetitive, tending to revisit the same issues again and again without ever resolving them?

Section 4: Lack of Commitment

18. Do you feel everyone in the team is committed to their job and to working as one team?
19. Do you feel your opinion is considered to be important by the rest of the team? Do you consider everyone else’s opinions important?
20. Has it ever been the case that the team has made a decision which you disagreed with? How did you feel about that?
21. Does the team have a clear direction (clear goals and aims you all agree you need to reach)?

Section 5: Avoidance of Accountability

22. Within this team, do you hold each other accountable? As in, when someone in the team is not reaching the standards expected amongst the team, does that person receive the right amount of pressure from the team to improve his/her performance? Is this done in a harmful manner or a respectful way?
23. Is the leader of the team always the one to pin-point the poor performers in the group or is there an open communication between all members to push each other respectively?
24. Is performance beyond the line of duty acknowledged and rewarded?
25. Are team members concerned with letting each other down? Does being in a team help you work harder since they are depending on your work?

Section 6: Inattention to Results

26. Do you feel the team is easily distracted or are you all focused on gaining results for the company?
27. Do team members focus on their own careers and individual goals or do you aim to reach collective results and focus on making the team grow?
28. How do you react to failure to achieve team goals and tangible results? Is success acknowledged and celebrated?
Appendix D: Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

I am a student at the University of Malta, currently reading for an undergraduate degree in Psychology. In part-fulfilment of my course, I am undertaking a dissertation concerning the effectiveness of team building training, under the supervision of Sheena Vella. The aim of this study is to evaluate whether team building training can be an effective cure to the several dysfunctions that a team may face.

The data that is needed for this study is being collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews will last for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interview will be recorded by means of a tape recorder, transcribed and submitted to qualitative analysis. All information obtained will be analysed in the form of a case study using thematic analysis. After all information is analysed, the voice recordings will be destroyed.

Please note that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline participation. Should you agree to participate in this study, please be aware that all information that is collected will be held as strictly confidential and your identity will not be disclosed at any point. Moreover, you have the right to not answer questions you would not like to answer, as well as to withdraw from the study at any time without the need to provide a reason for your withdrawal.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your time. If you kindly agree to participate in this research project, please sign the consent form attached. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Maxine Peregin
B. Psychology (Honours) Course 2010-13
Tel: 79 90 00 07
Email: maxine92@gmail.com
Supervisor: Sheena Vella
Appendix E: Trainers’ Consent Form

I, the undersigned participant, am willing to participate in Maxine Peregin’s research project regarding the effectiveness of team building training. I agree to be interviewed and for that interview to be recorded (with an audio recorder only) with the understanding that the semi-structured interview shall be used solely for academic reasons.

I understand that no personal information shall be disclosed and that all recorded material shall be destroyed once the research project is carried out, finalized, and graded. I understand that I am allowed to withdraw from the project at any point from now till the assignment is handed in without the need to give any reason for my doing so.

I have been briefed about the nature and aims of the study, and have had the opportunity to ask further questions and seek clarifications. I am satisfied by these conditions and consent to participation in this study.

Signatures:  Participant.......................... Date..........................  

Researcher............................. Date.............................
## Appendix F: Table of Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Themes</th>
<th>Organising Themes</th>
<th>Global Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. One-to-One sessions</td>
<td>Data Gathering &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>The Team Building Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Feedback Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Tailor-made</td>
<td>Action Planning &amp; Implementation</td>
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<td>4. Dipping Approach</td>
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<td>5. Off-site</td>
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<td>6. Positive Feedback</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<td>7. Ongoing Process</td>
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<td>8. Departmental</td>
<td>Working individually vs. in a team</td>
<td>Team’s Weaknesses</td>
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<td>9. Macro vs. Micro</td>
<td>Unproductive Meetings</td>
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<td>10. Decision Making &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<td>11. Artificial Harmony</td>
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<td>14. Self-development</td>
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<td>15. Time Management</td>
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<td>16. Team Building</td>
<td>Team level</td>
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<td>17. Personal relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Goals and Vision</td>
<td>Company Level</td>
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<td>19. Structure</td>
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<td>The Outcomes of the Training</td>
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<td>21. Decreased motivation</td>
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<td>24. Managing department teams</td>
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<td>25. Sessions with Directors</td>
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