

2021 Team Building Trends



by Anne Thornley-Brown, MBA
President, Executive Oasis International
<http://www.executiveoasis.com>
@executiveoasis



What lies ahead for team building in 2021?



COVID-19 has been a game changer for the meetings and events. Travel and meeting bans, and lockdown that were used to contain COVID-19 disrupted the entire industry including team building and executive retreats.

Jurisdictions around the world are expected to enter in and out of lockdown for the foreseeable future, COVID-19 meeting, assembly, and travel bans will continue to be part of the reality for the team building space. As a result, we can expect to see the following trends.

Team Building Trends

1. Virtual Team Building Trends
2. Short, Focused, Modular Team Building
3. Highly Customized Bespoke Team Building
4. Project Focused Team Building
5. Virtual Worlds
6. Virtual Reality
7. Drive Through Team Building
8. Virtual Cocktail Parties and Virtual Happy Hour

1. Virtual Team Building Trends



The Pivot to Virtual

In many jurisdictions, virtual or hybrid building is the only way to go.

- **Virtual team building:** Team Building delivered remotely via technology.
- **Hybrid team building:** The majority of participants virtually join a small group of participants gathered in person safely and social distanced.

Sometimes, it is possible to have small gatherings at satellite meeting or conference rooms linked together through virtual technology.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0mu4kudoWM>

The important thing to remember is that virtual and hybrid team building is never an excuse for “pour and bore”, a term coined by the late Dave Meier who founded the Center for Accelerated Learning.

Even team building delivered via Zoom doesn’t have to involve a facilitator droning on and on and lulling participants into a comatose state.

Virtual team building can and should be interactive and engaging with **HIGHLY** customized exercises and approaches.

- [Lemons to Lemonade: Squeezing Opportunities out of Adversity When Business Goes Sour](#), our highly customizable business simulation was designed to help companies address the specific challenges unleashed as a result of COVID-19

2. Short, Focused, Modular Team Building

A Focused Approach

With all or most participants joining in remotely from the comfort of their own homes, the pressure to deliver team building in short formats to accommodate distractions and shrinking attention spans has intensified.

This does not mean that the content for a 2-3-day session can be delivered in an hour or two.

Instead, follow these guidelines:

- break the content down into bite-sized 1 1/2-to-2-hour modules
- keep the presentation segments to a digestible minimum
- use virtual breakout rooms and whiteboards to keep sessions interactive
- keep participants alert with a generous serving of energizers including music, relaxation exercises, stretching vacation, and even dance breaks.

The same energizers that work for face-to face team building can transition to the virtual world. Virtual energizers can be as short as 30 seconds and still effective.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwSK2Rn4388>

- **Themed or Outdoor Team Building:** In the virtual world, it's possible to create just about any ambiance or environment.

This virtual meeting room by MeetinVR is an excellent example of what's possible.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPoplf9NPDQ>

Once COVID-19 levels have subsided, a longer module or a face-to face follow up session can be delivered and include indoor or outdoor team challenges to flesh out your theme. It can include a celebration of team achievements.

3. Highly Customized Bespoke Team Building

A Custom Crafted Approach

Bespoke, a British term, dating back to 1593, refers to something that is tailor made and custom crafted for a specific client. With more and more clients facing COVID-19 related challenges, a cookie cutter approach to team building just won't cut it.

At Executive Oasis International, our approach is to help clients:

- Identify their specific challenges.
- Pinpoint desired outcomes.
- State their budget in terms of time and money.

Then, we custom design an approach to address their challenges and achieve desired outcomes within the scope of their budget and time parameters.

Sometimes this involves using exercises from our repository of team building simulations. Other times, it means custom designing a brand-new approach for a specific client.



4. Project Focused Team Building

Project focused team building like our [Visexecutaries: Seizing Opportunities in our Shifting Corporate Landscape](#) simulation is ideal for virtual or hybrid delivery.

Participants gather virtually to pick up a toolkit for brainstorming, planning, and implementation. The teams meet separately to apply what they have learned to execute specific projects to address organizational challenges and resolve issues.

[Lemons to Lemonade](#) is specifically designed to guide teams in the process of addressing the challenges unleashed through COVID-19.

5. Virtual Worlds



Beyond Zoomed Out

Zoomed out corporate teams are eager for a more engaging approach. Virtual and hybrid team building can be delivered wholly or partly via virtual worlds platforms like MeetinVR, Virtway, Second Life or. If your company has set up virtual offices, the facilitator can join your team and deliver team building through your own platform.

6. Virtual Reality

Virtual reality is well worth exploring to deliver sessions that are upbeat and interactive. Participants are furnished with Googles and they can have a challenge to complete together.

Sansar, which was originally developed by Linden Labs, the brainpower behind Second Life, brings participants together in a 3D virtual platform.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6nWmbo_jzw



7. Drive Through Team, Building

Drive through Christmas events saved parades and other live events during the 2020 Christmas season. This same approach can save face-to-face team building sessions

For example, for our desert survival team building, participants can complete the exercise and brain storming sessions virtual. They can then be picked up in 4 x 4s for dune bashing or dune drives. These experiences are already designed for teams travelling together in separate vehicles so the transition will be quite smooth.

A similar approach can be used for winter team building and wilderness survival team building.

Team Building is not a Virtual Cocktail Party

8. Virtual Cocktail Parties and Virtual Happy Hour

In our team building reports for the last few years, we've highlighted the fact that all team building trends are not positive or effective.

For example, we have addressed the pitfalls of foolishness and folly and using fun and games as a replacement for facilitated team building.

The same bad practices that derailed face-to-face team building have made their way to the virtual world.

Remember virtual happy hours, ukulele lessons, and magic shows are not a substitute for real team building

VIDEO https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoG0_Gyg-kA

In fact, the virtual cocktail parties are creating some real challenges that will persist long after lockdown. Specifically, some employees are developing drinking problems. This is a serious team building pitfall to avoid.

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Remember: [Team Building is not a Virtual Happy Hour](#) (Blog Post).