Team building definition:

Team building is the process of deliberately creating an effective team by focusing on those factors that support (or block) team performance. Common team building activities focus on clarifying roles and goals; building trust, accountability and commitment; improving or designing processes; supporting the use of healthy team norms to encourage effective communication and conflict resolution; and focusing on leadership behaviors. Often, a team-building event will focus on more than one aspect of team-building.

At its most comprehensive, team building begins with an assessment process that looks at different areas of team effectiveness and then uses the data to determine the actions. Most commonly, though, team building activities are used as maintenance (and even an excuse for fun) for an already-functioning team.

Common objectives of a team building agenda include:
- ❑ Increase the ability of team members to communicate directly with each other in ways that support healthy, trusting relationships;
- ❑ Improve the ability of team members to problem-solve;
- ❑ Integrate new team members and/or a new team leader;
- ❑ Develop a shared mission, vision and values;
- ❑ Gain consensus on shared team norms that support healthy functioning of the team;
- ❑ Give and receive feedback to each other; and/or
- ❑ Recognize and reward individual and team efforts.

Examples of different types of team building activities:
- ❑ Learning together about a particular topic or skill area and then applying it to the team. It can be technical in nature or more focused on interpersonal skills, such as communication or conflict resolution skills.
- ❑ Learning more about each other through the use of some type of assessment – sharing the results and learning how the different results influence the team.
- ❑ A simulation or game of some sort that allows the team members to learn more about each other and dynamics that show up in the team or organization. Topics may be problem-solving, leadership, change, etc.
- ❑ Identifying interdependent but polarizing tensions that influence a team and the actions that will help balance out the polarity. (Examples of polarities include balancing work/life; lead/manage; lead/follow; stability/change.)
- ❑ Specific discussions about trust and how it is created and maintained among team members.

Interested in a consultation? Contact Holmes Street Leadership**, denise@holmesstreetleadership.com**