

## A Case Study on Team Building: Outsource or Do-It-Yourself?

It was late spring in 2023, the beginning of the second quarter, and the board of a medium-sized manufacturing enterprise in the Netherlands sat down to discuss talent development at their organization. The chair of the board produced a list of statistics he had recorded from a recent article and shared them with his team:



More than 80% of employers and employees believe that creating a **sense of community** at work is important.<sup>1</sup>



78% of people are seeking a more **supportive work culture**.<sup>2</sup>



52% of workers consider **company culture** to be just as crucial when working remotely as it is in a physical office setting.<sup>3</sup>



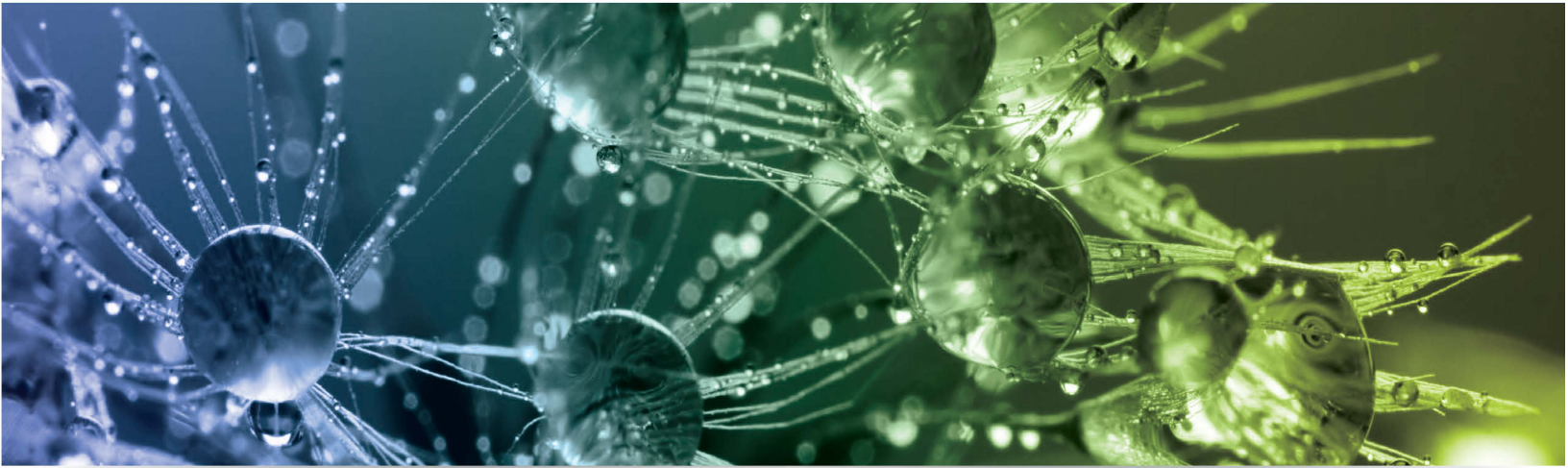
41% of workers find it **challenging to adjust** to a company's culture while working remotely.<sup>4</sup>



Nearly 50% of remote workers miss **spontaneous interactions** in the office.<sup>5</sup>



Only 33% of companies organize **simple team building activities** such as virtual coffee and tea breaks.<sup>6</sup>



Prompted by these findings, the board decided to make team building the focus of their organization's talent development efforts for the remainder of the year. During the next monthly meeting with the company's President, Suzanne Doebber, the board made a formal request for a proposal outlining a comprehensive team building initiative to be presented at the following monthly meeting. This timeline would allow the board to evaluate and approve the proposal, and subsequently launch the initiative in the third and fourth quarter. Suzanne, understandably, felt somewhat overwhelmed by the magnitude of this undertaking. While her company had organized events like open houses and summer barbecues in the past, they had never implemented a company-wide talent development program, let alone one that placed such a strong emphasis on team building. Consequently, Suzanne decided to speak with her Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), Guillermo Santos.

The next day, Suzanne spoke with Guillermo and asked him to develop a project plan for the team-building initiative. She requested that he present the plan to her in three weeks so they could review and make necessary edits before sharing it with the board. In his role, Guillermo is responsible for hiring new talent and managing onboarding strategies, performance reviews, and professional development opportunities. He is also responsible for ensuring that all employees receive legally-mandated training and that teams comply with workplace safety regulations. Realistically speaking, Guillermo may need to put these tasks on hold to complete this team-building proposal and execute the plan. Following his conversation with Suzanne, Guillermo began to wonder. Other organizations have full-time positions dedicated to ongoing talent development — should Guillermo request permission to hire a talent development officer? Before jumping to conclusions, Guillermo decided to do a little more research about how much work a proper team-building process actually entails.

A few hours later, Guillermo reduced his options to three:

1. **CREATE, FROM THE GROUND UP**, an entire team-building process and all supporting materials.
2. **USE AN EXISTING PROCESS** and search for as many free tools and templates as he can find.
3. **HIRE A CONSULTING FIRM** to guide the company through the team-building process.

Each of these options has its own set of benefits and drawbacks. Before Guillermo makes a decision, he takes some time to think through the advantages and disadvantages of all three options.

“No matter how many options we have, the real challenge is figuring out how to evaluate them. — Aziz Ansari





## → COMPARING OPTIONS

### 1. CREATING A TEAM-BUILDING PLAN FROM THE GROUND UP

Developing an entirely new team-building plan from the ground up is ambitious, Guillermo knows that. As CHRO, Guillermo has many other duties he will need to continue performing while implementing the team-building plan. Guillermo doesn't think he can reasonably do both effectively, but he wants to consider this option before eliminating it entirely.

#### PROS + CONS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All models and assessments are customized to meet the needs of the organization.</li> <li>■ There may be opportunities to publish or gain proprietary rights to any methods or models developed along the way.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This route would take Guillermo exponentially more time.</li> <li>■ Guillermo has no background in industrial-organizational psychology or statistical methods, beyond a few courses he had to take to get his HR designation. He may not be qualified or able to develop psychological measures and other materials that are both valid and reliable.</li> </ul> |
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### 2. USING EXISTING TEAM-BUILDING TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

After careful consideration, Guillermo is confident that he won't create a team-building plan from the ground up. After performing a quick Google search, Guillermo finds a wide range of readily accessible tools and templates that he can download and utilize. He likes the idea of spending more time researching upfront, intending to handle all tasks independently afterward. However, Guillermo knows there are some risks that come with a do-it-yourself (DIY) approach to talent development.

#### PROS + CONS

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cost-effective.</li> <li>■ Guillermo has more ownership and control of the process and results.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Effectiveness depends on the quality of the resources available online.</li> <li>■ Guillermo will have to spend a significant amount of time researching the team-building process, comparing tools and templates, and learning how to use them.</li> <li>■ The entire administration and implementation of the team-building plan will be Guillermo's sole responsibility.</li> </ul> |
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### 3. WORKING WITH A TALENT DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

As Guillermo carefully considers the advantages and disadvantages of handling the team-building process himself, he is gaining a deeper understanding of the significant efforts required to develop and execute the entire process. Consequently, he is contemplating the potential benefits of partnering with a consultant to ensure a successful outcome.

#### PROS + CONS

- Access to a proven team-building process, as well as tools and templates that have been optimized through years of client use.
  - No preparation required; only a short amount of time is spent implementing and communicating steps along the way.
  - No analysis or decision-making required; experienced talent development consultants will provide Guillermo with a detailed team-building plan that suits the scope and scale of the organization's needs.
  - Ongoing support from consultants who are experts in the field.
  - Access to a broader selection of high-quality tools, templates, and other resources.
- Requires a higher initial investment.

#### NOT-SO-FUN FACTS<sup>1</sup>

**67%** of well-formulated strategic plans fail due to poor execution.<sup>7</sup>

**1 in 3** leaders rate their company as “poor” or “very poor” at implementing strategic plans.<sup>8</sup>





## → SAVING TIME VS. SAVING MONEY

Guillermo finishes his list of pros and cons and sits back to evaluate. He is almost certain that he doesn't want to create a team-building plan from the ground up — why would he when there are plenty of resources available for free online? What Guillermo isn't sure about is the quality of the free resources available to him. He's also not sure whether he has the time, expertise, or qualifications to implement a team-building process well himself. Throughout his professional career, Guillermo's focus within the field of human resources has primarily been on the legal and organizational components, rather than the socio-psychological elements that are essential for effective team building.

After about an hour, Guillermo realizes that his ultimate decision revolves around the trade-off between saving time and saving money. Working with a consultant might be more expensive up front, but it would save Guillermo and his company a significant amount of time. Guillermo is also aware that an ineffective team-building process may be much more costly in the long run — both in time and money — compared to the relatively small investment his company would have to make in having a consultant get them started.

In an effort to make an informed decision, Guillermo performs some quick mental math to assess the time required for conducting team building on his own versus hiring a consultant. SIGMA Assessment Systems was recommended to him by a former colleague, so Guillermo consults the available information in SIGMA Assessment Systems' team-building tools and services to aid in his calculations.

	<b>DIY</b>	<b>SUCCESSION WITH SIGMA</b>
<b>EXPERTISE</b>	<b>20</b> Guillermo estimates that he will need to dedicate approximately 20 hours to familiarize himself with team-building fundamentals, including best practices and available resources.	<b>0</b> SIGMA's consultants know team building inside and out. Guillermo won't need to do any preparation beforehand; SIGMA's consultants will answer all of his questions and tell him everything he needs to know.
<b>PROCESS</b>	<b>10 TO 40</b> Guillermo will have to create a team-building process and document a step-by-step approach for how he is going to create his plan. Based on whether or not Guillermo uses an existing model, this could take him between 10 and 40 hours.	<b>0</b> SIGMA has ready-made talent development processes that have been tried and tested with clients across industries and around the world. Guillermo would have no work to do, and he would have added peace of mind knowing that SIGMA's process is proven to be both efficient and effective.

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	HRS <b>DIY</b>	HRS <b>SUCCESSION WITH SIGMA</b>
<b>MATERIALS</b>	<b>10 TO 40</b> Guillermo will have to create materials to support his team-building process. He can use SIGMA's free tools and templates, or he can draft his own. Either way, Guillermo will have to prepare a few slide decks and materials for presentation; this could take him between 10 and 40 hours.	<b>0</b> No preparation required! SIGMA has slides, activities, and resources that have been vetted by many clients before Guillermo. SIGMA also has a large archive of supporting documents. Guillermo will have access to all of SIGMA's tools, and SIGMA's consultants will be available to create new resources to meet any needs specific to Guillermo's organization along the way.
<b>LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK (MODEL)</b>	<b>10 TO 40</b> To make sound decisions about team development, Guillermo will need a framework for leadership skills. This will be used to understand each team's strengths and development opportunities. Depending on whether he decides to create his own model, or uses an existing one, this could take anywhere from 10 to 40 hours.	<b>0</b> SIGMA has a ready-made <u>Leadership Competency Framework</u> that corresponds to all of SIGMA's services and assessments. This framework was developed and validated by industry experts, so Guillermo knows it will be an accurate and reliable tool for developing teams in his organization. There is no time required at this stage from him.
<b>TALENT ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>20</b> In addition to a robust leadership model, Guillermo wants to make sure he gets accurate and objective measures of his employees' skills. To do this, Guillermo wants to use a talent assessment. Researching talent assessments, selecting the right one, and administering it will take Guillermo approximately 20 hours.	<b>5</b> Corresponding to its Leadership Competency Framework, SIGMA offers the <u>Leadership Skills Profile – Revised™ (LSP-R)</u> . SIGMA will introduce Guillermo to this leadership assessment and provide him with supporting slide decks, development guides, and other administrative tools. With all that help, talent assessment will only take Guillermo five hours.
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	<b>20</b> Guillermo will have to prepare, practice, and facilitate any presentations or group sessions included in his team-building process. This will take up to 20 hours.	<b>2 TO 6</b> Guillermo can sit back, relax, and let SIGMA handle the communication of the team-building plan. SIGMA's consultants will prepare and facilitate all presentations, group sessions, and other workshops. All Guillermo needs to do is to attend.
<b>DATA COLLECTION &amp; PROCESSING</b>	<b>20 TO 40</b> Guillermo will be responsible for compiling, analyzing, and working with all of the LSP-R data himself. This includes creating talent and team profiles from everyone's results, which is expected to take him approximately 20-40 hours.	<b>0</b> SIGMA's consultants will collect data from all participants in Guillermo's team-building program. Results will be organized, analyzed, and used to prepare all other documents needed to continue the team-building process. Although it will take SIGMA consultants approximately 25 hours to work through this streamlined process, it will not require any of Guillermo's time.
<b>TEAM BUILDING PROPOSAL</b>	<b>10</b> Guillermo will have to create a formal team-building proposal and present it to his supervisor and possibly his board of directors. This proposal will take him approximately 10 hours to prepare.	<b>2</b> SIGMA will provide an executive summary of Guillermo's team-building plan in the form of PowerPoint slides. All Guillermo has to do is present. Given that his supervisor is busy, Guillermo thinks he can both prepare and present in two hours.
<b>COMMUNICATING THE PLAN</b>	<b>10</b> Guillermo will have to communicate the team-building process, invite people to meetings, and answer questions along the way. Throughout the entire planning process, this will take Guillermo approximately 10 hours.	<b>2</b> SIGMA's consultants will introduce the team-building process to Guillermo's organization and answer any questions his colleagues have along the way. SIGMA will also provide Guillermo with email templates and meeting agendas. Altogether, Guillermo won't need to spend more than two hours sending a few emails and being available for his team.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130 – 240 HOURS</b>	<b>11 – 15 HOURS</b>



## → DECISION TIME

Guillermo is quite surprised when he adds up the hours. Trying to build a team-building process on his own — even with third-party tools — could take him anywhere from three to five weeks if he’s completely focused on only the team-building plan. Guillermo estimates that even if he’s able to balance planning with his other ongoing duties, it could take him upwards of six months to get the job done. That won’t work with the board’s goal to launch a team-building process in the next quarter. Not only that, even if the board agrees to give him that time, Guillermo isn’t sure whether he wants to risk developing a plan on his own that may not be implemented properly. Since this is such an important strategic process, Guillermo wants to make sure it’s done right.

Ultimately, Guillermo is faced with the following considerations:

- **DIY TEAM BUILDING WOULD TAKE GUILLERMO BETWEEN THREE AND FIVE WEEKS** — or longer if he encounters unforeseen challenges along the way, which Guillermo thinks is likely.
- **TEAM BUILDING WITH SIGMA WOULD TAKE ONLY 13-15 HOURS OF GUILLERMO’S TIME.** This option would allow him to deliver a robust team building proposal to the president and their board within the next few weeks while continuing to perform his other ongoing duties.
- **CUSTOMIZED CONSULTING WILL BE AN EXPENSE UP FRONT, HOWEVER, SIGMA HAS A WEALTH OF SUPPORTING RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR FREE, AND WORKING WITH A CONSULTANT COULD SAVE GUILLERMO’S COMPANY SIGNIFICANT COSTS IN THE LONG TERM** if the alternative is a DIY team-building plan that is substandard and poorly-executed.

Knowing what you know, and if you were Guillermo, what would you do?

## → READY TO GET STARTED?

Ready to start your own team-building process? Visit SIGMA’s website to learn more about the [LSP-R](#) and [order online](#). Download the LSP-R for Team Building guide and begin drafting your own team-building process today.



**LSP-R FOR TEAM BUILDING**



**EXPLORE SIGMA’S CUSTOMIZED CONSULTING**

Interested in further support? Explore SIGMA’s customized consulting services and speak with our experts to see how SIGMA can meet the specific needs of your organization. Engagements can be as large or as small as you need them to be. Our consultants will work with your leadership team to create a customized project plan that suits your talent development and team-building needs. ■





## SIGMA'S TEAM-BUILDING RESOURCES

SIGMA has a variety of team-building tools and templates. Explore our resources below:



**LSP-R for Team Building Guide**



**How to Develop Your Team-Building Skills**



**Great Leaders Build Great Teams**

## → TALK TO AN EXPERT



**EMAIL GLEN**



**1-800-401-4480 ext. 233**



**SCHEDULE A CALL**

Glen oversees SIGMA's sales and marketing activities. As a skilled presenter and trainer, he has designed and delivered engaging workshops and webinars for senior managers and HR professionals. Glen knows our material inside and out, and can tell you first-hand stories of the work SIGMA has done with its clients. If you are interested in learning more about SIGMA's succession planning services, send him an email or give him a call! He'd love to chat with you.

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