BGI’s Teambuilding 101

“Cultivating Growth in Learning Organizations” is a two-day training program that follows an intensive listening process to fine tune objectives and integrate outcomes with organizational culture. The program shaped by a series of unique, highly engaging initiatives coupled with community building activities.

BGI’s customized initiatives are a compelling vehicle for skill development. They focus on team performance, while exploring learning styles, issues of trust, and cultural assumptions. To successfully complete an initiative, team members must define the problem, visualize outcomes, share strategies, and analyze an idea’s merits and drawbacks. The team then makes trial attempts, deals with personal style and “mental model” differences, reconsiders, and finally, cooperates in reaching a solution.

John’s facilitation emphasizes the fundamental role of feedback in high performing teams. We will study this in action, then apply our learning by practicing new skills as the group *thinks, plans, decides, and acts,* carrying out the traditional management skills of *planning, analyzing, organizing, and communicating.*

Team members spend time negotiating with each other, discussing issues, identifying goals, and giving voice to new commitments. They explore how to transfer the agreements, techniques and skills they used during the training into specific strategies they can apply in their team settings back at the workplace.

We will learn that feedback isn’t just what gets ranked in annual performance reviews. It’s what gets thanked, commented on, invited, or dropped on a daily basis. We come to understand a counterintuitive reality: the receiver is in charge of the feedback. They decide what to do with it; whether to change it; ignore it; or, how to make sense of it.

Training Goals

1. Learning the Art of Feedback

a) Know different forms of feedback (information, coaching, evaluation)

b) Practice giving and receiving feedback while the group observes

c) How to create safety when admitting or addressing weaknesses

d) Develop “pull” versus “push” in the organization

e) Practice “multi-track” feedback while the group observes

 2. Understanding the Elements of Collaboration

a) Develop consensus about a working definition of this complex concept

b) Distinguish between cooperation, shared decision making, etc.

c) Identify what hinders and enhances collaboration

d) How to address our blind spots via the “Gap Map”

e) Know the relationship between sustainability and good collaboration

 3. Building Relationships ­of Trust

a) Experience the genuine and unique positives of working together

b) Share personal narratives about core values

c) Share stories of learning that include failure

d) Know how each team member hears appreciation and encouragement

e) Be inspired by the courage and vulnerability of personal stories

 4. Transferring New Learning to the Workplace

a) Develop individual commitments for growth and learning

 b) Develop consensus about what “growth” means for the organization

 c) Experiment with new feedback skills in dyads and triads

 d) Receive feedback on these experiments

 e) Identify how blind spots will be addressed

 f) Role play the use of feedback to defuse typical conflicts

 5. Enjoyment

 a) Model the way learning can be social, fun, and transformative

Facilitation and Conditions

“Cultivating Growth Identities in Learning Organizations” is an intensive, fast-paced, two-day process grounded by John Braman’s many years of experiential training in diverse, mission-driven organizations. His work is influenced by Peter Senge’s “Learning Organization” theory, as well as the recent writings of Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen[[1]](#footnote--1).

John’s co-facilitator is a leading international trainer with whom John has collaborated since 1990. His expertise is team building for organizations in Europe, Africa, China and the USA. The magic of their partnership lies in their ability to listen for themes, discern unseen organizational potential, and design unique initiatives that reveal this potential in inspiring ways.

Their approach to teaching is fun, flexible and hands-on, involving short lessons of a theoretical nature, but more often leadership of discussions that arise from “teachable moments” and leadership of debriefings at completion of initiatives. Over the course of two days, these debriefings help achieve learning goals, including making the transfer from the training to the regular workplace and addressing staff concerns revealed during the pre-program interviews.

The training best achieves its purposes when the whole staff of small organizations is included and when participants step out of normal workday expectations. This means not returning to the office, putting aside smart phones, and doing some homework related to the training at the end of the first day.

1. “Training ourselves how to give feedback can be helpful. But if the receiver of the feedback isn’t willing or able to absorb it, then there’s only so far persistence and skillful delivery can go. Therefore, the receivers are in control of what they do and don’t do, how they make sense of what there’s hearing, and whether they choose to change.

So, pushing harder rarely opens the door to genuine learning. The focus should not be on teaching feedback givers to give. The focus – at work and at home – should be on feedback receivers, helping us all to become more skillful learners.”

 – From *Thanks for the Feedback*, Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen [↑](#footnote-ref--1)