



## How to Do It

# A Guide to Successful Team Challenges in the Community

<b>Short Guide to Running a Successful Team Challenge</b>	<b>Pages 2 - 4</b>
Sample Health & Safety Checklist	Pages 5 - 7
Sample Personal Declaration and Medical Information Sheet for Volunteers	Pages 8 - 9
Sample Feedback Form for Team Members	Pages 10 -11
Sample Feedback Form for Voluntary Organisation	Pages 12 - 13

## How to Do It

### A Guide to Successful Team Challenges in the Community

A “team challenge” is a one-off practical task completed by a group of employees over a short period, often on one day. Challenges are great team building events, and offer staff a day away from the office where they can develop new skills and go home with a real sense of achievement. Examples include: decorating a social centre, clearing a riverbank, creating a children’s playground, or organising a Christmas party.

This Guide is written by Swindon companies with experience of organising successful team challenges to help you plan and manage challenges that run smoothly and benefit the community, your employees, and your company.

- **Planning and Managing the Challenge**

Appoint a challenge team leader to manage and lead the event. This can be a good development opportunity for a junior member of staff.

- **Identifying a suitable challenge.**

- Contact Volunteer Centre Swindon for help in finding a voluntary group who would like your help. The Centre will need to know:
  - What are your objectives from the event? – is this to help team building, to put something back in to the community, or to secure good publicity?
  - How flexible are your requirements? - do you want a challenge taking place inside or outside?; in the day time or at the weekend?; do you have a small or large team?
  - Do you have a particular type of activity in mind? – a practical task such as decorating or environmental work ; or organising a social activity such as an outing for the elderly, or a fundraising event?
- The more flexible you are, the easier it will be to find a challenge that will benefit the community as well as your employees and company.
- Allow enough time for the Centre to find you a suitable challenge and for you to plan the event (2 months ahead is a good guide)

- **Liaising with the Voluntary Organisation**

- The team leader should visit the organisation which the challenge is with to assess the scope of the task and to consider practical and safety questions.
- Agree with staff from the organisation what you aim to achieve on the day. Be realistic about how much time it will take and work out a timetable for the day to ensure the work can be completed. Allow time to clear up at the end of the day.
- Determine how many people will be needed and can be accommodated. (Decorating challenges don’t go very well if too many people are trying to paint a small room!)
- Agree who will be doing what before, during, and after the event. Particularly be clear about who is project managing the event.
- Write your agreement down to avoid misunderstanding.

- **Resources**

- Identify all the costs and agree with the voluntary organisation who will pay for what. Costs are likely to include materials, equipment purchase or hire, transport, refreshments, and the Volunteer Centre’s fee. The voluntary organisation is unlikely to be able meet the costs.

- Plan how you will meet the costs – the team may fundraise as part of the challenge; your company may provide funds or resources; and you may be able to obtain donations of goods or the loan of equipment from other local companies.
- **Insurance**  
Your “duty of care” to your employees extends to when they are taking part as volunteers in an employer sponsored project. To fulfil this “duty of care” you need to:
  - ensure volunteers are adequately trained
  - ensure volunteers are adequately supported and supervised
  - ensure volunteers are not placing themselves in danger
  - ensure your insurance policy covers employees volunteering outside their place of work. The insurance company may need specific information about the event from you. You may need to take out extra insurance if employees are doing “hazardous tasks” or if the challenge is outside business hours or at a weekend.
- **Health & Safety**
  - Ask a trained member of staff to complete a risk assessment and implement the recommendations. (see attached checklist).
  - If the challenge involves working with young or vulnerable people, your volunteers may need to be checked with the criminal records bureau, which can take between a couple of weeks and 3 months.
  - Agree who is providing first aid cover
  - Before the day, brief staff volunteers on the task they are undertaking. Make sure they understand the health & safety requirements, and the insurance cover position. Ensure volunteers feel free to withdraw if they are not physically fit for the task. You may wish to ask participants to complete a personal declaration (see attached).
  - Ensure that you are not planning to undertake any work that is outside your team’s technical capability, for example office workers should not do re-wiring or plumbing for which they are not officially qualified.
- **Recruiting volunteers**
  - Plan how you will attract the right number of suitable volunteers and avoid no-shows.
  - If too few or too many people volunteer, plan how to deal with this so that the task does get completed or that every volunteer has enough to do on the day.
  - Ensure there is full management agreement for challenges in work hours.
- **Practical Details**
  - Is there adequate parking or public transport or have you booked transport?
  - Have you provided volunteers with maps and directions?
  - Will the voluntary organisation’s staff and users be absent (if so has the voluntary organisation planned where they will be?) or will you will be able to work around them?
  - Who will deliver or bring equipment and supplies, and when?
  - Are there adequate washing and toilet facilities?
  - Are there facilities and space on site to provide refreshments and who will provide them?
  - If staff go off-site for lunch, have you agreed with them who will pay? How will you make sure that the long lunch ends? – challenges have been known to remain unfinished after lunch in the pub!
  - Will the activity generate large amounts of waste and how will you dispose of this?

- Arrange for publicity of the event – take your own camera, but also try to get the local press along
- **On the Day**
  - Have a contingency plan – what if it is raining? what if materials do not turn up?
  - Ensure the project manager or someone from the voluntary organisation introduces the purpose of the challenge – who does the voluntary organisation help and how will they, and the volunteers, benefit from the day.
  - Brief the volunteers on fire escapes, toilets, etc.
  - If problems arise during the day, try to resolve them with staff from the voluntary group as they occur
  - Keep an eye on the time and ensure the day runs to schedule. Leave enough time for clearing up at the end of the day before you leave.
  - Before the volunteers leave, say thank you to everyone involved. Ensure the voluntary group also has an opportunity to thank the volunteers.
- **Moving on from a team challenge**
  - For everyone to get the greatest benefit from a team challenge, consider how you can build on the enthusiasm volunteers will feel at the end of the challenge to encourage them to undertake further volunteering.
  - Ensure team challenges get plenty of publicity internally through noticeboards, emails, and in-house publications. Some companies use award schemes to recognise individual and team volunteers.
- **Assessing the effectiveness of the event**

Decide what you are trying to achieve through the challenge and complete an evaluation with the volunteers and voluntary group after the day (see attached feedback forms) to assess your achievement.

## Health and Safety Checklist

<b>Name of risk assessor:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
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<b>Name of the Challenge Event:</b>
<b>Short Description:</b>
<b>Date(s) of the event:</b>

<b>Name of Voluntary Organisation:</b>
<b>Name of main contact:</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Telephone number :</b>
<b>Location of Challenge (if different from address above):</b>

<b>List of equipment to be used:</b>
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**Risk assessment e.g. anticipating the main problems**

Potentially Hazardous activities (see attached list)	Actions Needed to Eliminate or Reduce each Risk (see attached list)	Name of Person Responsible for each Risk

**Identifying Individuals at Risk**

Issue, collect in, and check the 'medical information sheet' and 'personal declaration' of volunteers.

<b>Names of Persons at Risk</b>
Employees:
Other Volunteers:
Members of the Public:

## Examples of potentially hazardous activities and points to consider in assessing their risk

### Gardening

- Digging
  - Large amounts of soil
  - Deep digging or shallow digging
- Planting
  - Large or heavy plants
- Pruning
  - Extending/stretching to reach
  - Sawing off larger branches
- Using Fertilizer
  - Hazard warning on bags
  - Storage
- Using mechanical or electrical equipment
  - Hover mowers
  - Petrol driven mowers/strimmers
  - Chain saws
  - Rotavators
- Carrying Loads
  - How are loads secured
  - Heavy loads
  - Frequent lifting
- Building Sheds/Greenhouses
  - Handling glass
  - Sawing/cutting/nailing

### Decorating

- Painting
  - Working above ground level- using ladders or portable platforms
  - Ventilation
  - Using chemical other than general cleaners, e.g. paint stripper, bleach.
- Carpentry
  - Sawing/nailing/cutting
  - Handling lengths of wood
- Electrical Equipment
  - Trailing leads
  - Near to water
  - Maker's instructions
  - Eye protection
  - Fitting plugs/bulbs/switches
- Fittings
  - Fixing shelves
  - Dismantling old cupboards/units
  - Installing new units

### **Actions needed to eliminate or reduce each risk may include**

- Training and supervision on safe use of tools;; use of chemicals; etc.
- Training on safe lifting/handling techniques and discussing any individual's physical limitations.
- Protective clothing e.g. gloves; strong boots; overalls; face mask; etc



- First Aider and first aid kit on-site
- Check necessary fire equipment (e.g. extinguishers, fire blankets) are available and working
- Mobile phone available for emergency use
- Use of 'power-breaker' on power tools



## Personal Declaration

**Name:**

**Scope:** Volunteer projects, Outdoor Learning, adventure team building, corporate entertainment events and community involvement activities

**Declaration:**

Whilst taking part in volunteer project(s) organised by (*company name*) I accept the following statements:

- The purpose of my participation is for charitable purposes
- My responsibility to actively understand the nature of health and safety risks
- My duty to adopt suitable precautions in partnership with (*company name*)
- The accuracy of personal information given in my 'medical information sheet' (attached)
- The responsibility for checking with my own GP if in doubt about my health and fitness for the event
- My freedom to participate or withdraw (under supervision) at any stage without any criticism.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Medical Information Sheet

- Since you are planning to be involved with an event away from your normal workplace, you may be participating in relatively unusual activities e.g. outdoor learning, 'adventure' team building, corporate entertainment event, sales conventions and community involvement activities. It is therefore advisable to maintain protection against tetanus and if you are in any doubt, please arrange for a tetanus injection, preferably before the event but certainly straight away if you do receive a cut or laceration.
- If you are taking any medicines, please ask your own doctor if it safe for you to participate in the planned activity. The purpose of this form is to ensure that special arrangements are made to protect anyone with a relevant medical condition
- Once complete, this form will remain confidential to your Manager and if in doubt (s)he may show it to the Health & Safety Team and/or the Occupational Health Department. If you do NOT wish to divulge this information, or you know that you are physically NOT fit to participate in a particular activity, you do NOT have to participate.

Medical condition	Yes / No	Further Information (optional)
Asthma, Bronchitis, tuberculosis		
Diabetes		
Epilepsy, fainting attacks, migraine, severe head injury		
Hay fever, allergy e.g. medicine, insect bites, food etc		
Heart condition, raised blood pressure		
History of fractures, arthritis or tendon/ligament damage		
Nervous illness or phobias		
Pregnancy		
Other condition (please specify)		
Have you recently been treated by a Doctor?		
Have you been treated by a doctor or in a hospital within the last 2 years for a condition which might be relevant to the planned activity?		

In view of the medical condition specified above, it would be of assistance to me if the company could provide

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**In emergency please contact** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tel. No.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Challenge Feedback Form Team Members

<b>Name:</b>
<b>Challenge Event participated in:</b>
<b>Date(s) of the event:</b>
<b>Name of Voluntary Organisation</b>

Have you volunteered before?                      Yes (at work)                      Yes (in own time)                      No

Did you enjoy the challenge?                      Yes                      It was OK                      No

What activities did you particularly enjoy doing?

What activities did you *not* particularly enjoy doing?

**Why did you volunteer?                      (please underline as many as applicable)**  
**For fun                      Get out of the office                      Team building exercise**  
**Meet people                      Learn new skills                      Get involved in community**  
**Other: (please state)**

Did you meet these objectives?                      Yes                      No

Did you find it useful in developing any of the following skills?

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
Leadership/people management			
Decision making			
Influencing & negotiation			
Creative thinking			
Problem solving			
Project management			

Budget management			
Prioritising			
Communication			
Team building			
Was it useful in:			
Making you feel good about working for the company?			
Enhancing the company's reputation in the local community?			
Getting the chance to try something different?			
Gaining an insight into the local community?			

**Would you consider doing another team challenge?** **Yes** **No**

**Would you consider volunteering outside of work?** **Yes** **No**

Please register online at [www.swindonvolunteers.org.uk](http://www.swindonvolunteers.org.uk)

**Was your line manager aware of your volunteering activity?** **Yes** **No**

**If yes, how supportive were they?** ☹ ☺ ☺

**Were you given time off to volunteer?** **Yes** **No**

**If yes, how many hours? (the company can record this as community investment)**

**Did you think the event was well organised?** **Yes** **No**

**Comments:**

**Please give details of any in-kind support that you negotiated from staff, suppliers or contractors i.e. loan of equipment, donated items etc.**

**What was your overall impression of the event and do you have any other comments you would like to make?**

## Challenge Feedback Form Voluntary Organisation

**Name:**

**Name of Voluntary Organisation:**

**Challenge Event participated in:**

**Date(s) of the event:**

**Was this the first time your organization had worked with a local company ?**      **Yes**      **No**

**If No, please give details of your previous involvement:**

**Why did your organisation participate in the challenge?**

**Were your expectations met?**

**What were the short term and long term benefits of the challenge to your organisation and to your users?**

**Did any of your staff develop new skills through the challenge?**

**Were there any drawbacks for you in participating in the challenge?**

**How pleased were you with the quality of the work completed?**

**Did you enjoy working with the team of volunteers?**

**Which aspect of the day do you feel was the most successful?**

**Are there any ways in which you feel the day could have been improved?**

**Do you have any ideas for how your organisation might like to work with our company in the future?**

**What was your overall impression of the event and do you have any other comments you would like to make?**