Team Building - Adding Value or Variety?

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business

Unitec Institute of Technology
Declaration

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This Thesis, entitled Team Building - Adding Value or Variety, is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Business.

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I confirm that:

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Abstract

A case study approach was adopted in order to discover what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building. Two prominent New Zealand organisations were studied as they undertook innovative activities designed to reflect workplace issues such as problem solving, goal setting and interpersonal relationships. One organisation used team building activities to reinforce the importance of teamwork, provide opportunities for the participants to better get to know one another, and enhance communication skills. The second organisation used team building activities to support their high performance team programme, which included enhancing communication skills through the use of feedback, developing interpersonal relationships, along with effective problem solving and goal setting.

While the two case study organisations had slightly different objectives, the results show that the activities were particularly effective in developing interpersonal relationships and, to a lesser degree, goal setting and problem solving skills. Responses from both organisations point to the team building activities contributing to an overall sense of belonging to the organisation and participants from both organisations also reported they were more likely to talk positively outside of their workplace about their respective companies. In both case studies, participants felt that the team building activities had had a positive impact on their workplace and that, overall, the inclusion of such activities had been beneficial to their organisations. The participants also reported that the use of creative activities along with an element of competition assisted in engaging the participants and contributed to an overall sense of positiveness. The overall findings support previous research, and suggest that team building can add both value and variety, when used as part of an overall training and development initiative.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Objective and overview

Team building as a development initiative falls within the realm of organisational development. Organisational development according to French, Bell and Zawacki (1999) is concerned with addressing issues regarding the human resources of an organisation. Grieves (2000) notes that organisational development began to emerge as a subject in its own right during the late 1960s and early 1970s and at the time was primarily focused on planned interventions that contributed to increasing organisational effectiveness. By the 1990s it was possible to identify two key themes of organisational development; “personal development and organisational learning” (Grieves, 2000, p. 364). Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Waters-Marsh (2008) define organisational development as encompassing various planned change interventions that are “built on humanistic-democratic values that seek to improve organisational effectiveness and employee well-being” (p. 657).

Robbins et al. (2008) discuss planned change as having two main goals; assisting with an organisation’s capacity to adapt to changes in its environment and changing employee behaviour. One common planned change intervention according to Salas, Rozell, Mullen and Driskell (1999) is team building. Team building itself is not a new concept. As Porras and Berg (1978) observed thirty years ago, team building was “one of the most frequently used organisational development interventions” (p. 251). Decades later, Salas et al. (1999) state that team building is still an “extremely popular and common intervention” (p. 309). The focus of this thesis is the use of team building as an organisational development tool.
This chapter begins by providing a definition and background to team building and the key objectives that underpin team building interventions. The research problem and overall aim of this study is then introduced. The chapter concludes by outlining the overall structure of this thesis.

**Team building definition**

The term ‘team building’ is commonly used to describe various activities and much of the literature reviewed provides varying definitions and terminology. Salas et al. (1999) conducted an integrative study of team building and noted that one of the challenges in reviewing the literature was the sheer diversity of team building interventions. According to Salas et al. (1999) the ambiguous nature of the term ‘team building’ has lead to the term being defined quite broadly in extant literature encompassing interventions that are “conceptually quite dissimilar” (p. 324).

The literature reviewed for this research revealed a multitude of team building interventions ranging from physically challenging endeavours such as abseiling, rock climbing and other similar outdoor pursuits to ‘games’ that require few if any props, are not physically demanding, and can be undertaken indoors or outdoors and in almost any location.

Many academics have made a distinction between the act and purpose of team building. McShane and Travaglione (2003) define the *act* of team building in terms of improving work teams. Woodman and Sherwood (1980) discuss team building as planned interventions that focus on developing team problem solving and effectiveness and are facilitated by a third-party consultant whereas according to Toofany (2007) the *purpose* of team building is to
enhance organisational effectiveness. This is usually accomplished by undertaking tasks that contribute to or enhance the overall effectiveness of a team. Svyantek, Goodman, Benz and Gard (1999) narrowed the purpose via their meta-analysis of related team building research to enhancing the interpersonal and problem solving skills of team members.

Mazany, Francis and Sumich (1995) define team building as an investment in the “people resource of an organisation” (p. 51). Mazany et al. omit the term intervention instead opting for a more generalised definition which is significant as the term ‘intervention’ may imply that there is a problem requiring remedial action. This is an important distinction as both of the organisations who participated in this research (referred hereafter as ‘DiggerCo’ and ‘FizzCo’) did not view the team building as an intervention, but rather an acknowledgment of the importance of providing on-going training and development initiatives. As Robbins et al. (2008) observe, these activities ultimately contribute to the overall enhancement of organisational effectiveness and employee well-being.

For the sake of clarity and to also reflect the objectives of both organisations who participated in this research, the term ‘activities’ rather than ‘interventions’ is used for the balance of this thesis, unless the researcher is quoting a direct reference.

**Team building objectives**

Beer (1976), Dyer (1977), Buller (1986), Sundstom, De Meuse and Futrell (1990), Robbins et al. (2008) discuss team building as comprising four fundamental elements: goal setting, interpersonal relations, problem-solving, and role clarification. In undertaking background research for this thesis, and discussing the aims with various team building facilitators,
it became clear that goal setting, problem-solving and interpersonal relations were invariably the most common drivers for businesses selecting team building as an organisational development tool. With this in mind the selection criteria for this study stipulates that any part of, or all of the three most common objectives, must form part of the overall design brief. The omission or inclusion of any of the four objectives is in line with the Robbins et al. (2008) observation that team building activities may incorporate any or all of these objectives in varying degrees, and that the selection of the objectives is solely dependant on the needs of the organisation at the time.

1.2 Research problem

Whilst many academics note that team building is a popular and frequently used intervention and various positive outcomes may be claimed, the actual results according to Salas et al. (1999) are often “mixed, vague or non-significant” (p. 309). Given such mixed results and the fact that both of the case study organisations that formed the basis for this thesis invested considerable time, money and resources engaging in team building, this researcher was initially interested in why the organisations elected to engage in team building activities as opposed to alternative training and development options. That is, was team building used as a development tool with clear objectives and expected outcomes or just simply to provide employees with a ‘fun day’ out of the office? The researcher was further interested in what, if any, organisational benefits were subsequently realised; as perceived by the participants and the managers responsible for training and development. Hence the overall title for this research of ‘team building - adding value or variety?’
While the title reflected the researcher’s main objective, a firm question that would frame the research problem was still required. After reviewing various studies pertaining to team building, the research question was established and then further refined. This process reflects Creswell’s (1994) observation that research questions often evolve during the process of research, and may then be modified or further defined as the research progresses.

The research question originally used the term ‘intervention’. This was subsequently replaced with ‘activities’. The reason for this was two-fold because as already noted the term ‘intervention’ can be interpreted negatively implying a problem and the need for remedial action, which is not always the case for an organisation electing to participate in team building. Secondly, accompanying the trial questionnaires was a synopsis of the type of team building expected to form the basis of this research. After trialing the questionnaire many of the volunteers queried the use of the word ‘intervention’, finding it slightly ambiguous, given the information each volunteer had received. The research question was therefore amended to acknowledge this feedback.

The overall aim of this research was to understand what benefits, if any, were accrued to an organisation as a result of engaging in team building, as perceived by the participants and the managers responsible for organising the programmes. It is the perceptions of the participants combined with perceptions of the training and development managers that this research is concerned with.

Therefore the research question is:

What, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?
The literature reviewed for this research revealed several recommendations regarding the incorporation of specific objectives. The use of the phrase ‘organisational benefits’ is based on the inclusion of some of these objectives which, according to Wheelan (2005), are more likely to produce positive results than those team building activities that do not. It is these positive results that can potentially translate to organisational benefits. The use of the term “activities” specifically refers to activities that are analogous to the workplace, are not physically challenging, and can be undertaken indoors or outdoors in almost any location.

1.3 Research aim and justification

Greenberg and Baron (2008) have identified many benefits as a result of utilising team building activities, including interdependence, increased job satisfaction, and improved working relationships, conflict resolution and effective communication. The mere act of bringing members of an organisation together provides employees with opportunities to not only get to know one another but it also permits individuals to engage in activities that allow for personal growth and development.

In addition, Benson (2006) notes that an employer providing training or development opportunities is likely to be viewed more positively and this contributes to an overall sense that the employer cares about its employees which is then reciprocated by the employee in the form of increased commitment to the organisation. The concept of organisational commitment, while not a specified objective of this research, has been included as a potential ancillary benefit, as any change in the level of commitment by the participants will be of some interest to the two organisations participating in this research and any employers assessing organisational development options.
A significant disadvantage is seen in the one main criticism of team building; the programmes are more about playing games than they are about changing behaviour (Rosenberg, 2007). Rosenberg (2007) notes that while the activities can be “fun and engaging often they do not have the desired effect when everyone returns to the office” (p. 26). A further disadvantage is perhaps the way ‘team building’ is perceived. Participation in team building activities appears to generate various opinions, some positive, some negative. The latter view was well illustrated in a recent New Zealand Sunday paper supplement that stated there were five things in life that one had to just accept and get on with in life. Occupying the number one spot was the “team building away day” (Sunday September 7th 2008). Whilst this comment was perhaps intended as slightly tongue in cheek, the comment itself seems to epitomise the polarised views that permeate opinions regarding team building. Mazany et al. (1995) also refer to criticism regarding the use of team building as nothing more than an excuse for time off which is paid for by the company.

The overarching aim of this project is to identify what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities. Specifically, team building utilising metaphoric activities designed to reflect workplace issues, for example problem solving, interpersonal relationships and goal setting. Other matters arising from the research question such as the implications of utilising metaphor based activities for organisations within New Zealand contemplating this form of team building, and the role of an external facilitator are also explored in this study.
The key objectives of this research are listed below, followed by brief descriptions which are further elaborated on later in this thesis.

- To define metaphor based team building activities.

- To describe the organisational objectives and expected outcomes of both of the participating organisations.

- To identify the advantages and disadvantages of team building for both the organisation and the participants.

Metaphoric team building activities encourage a hands-on approach by all participants involving tasks that are metaphorically analogous to the workplace. For example, the construction of a catapult can be used as a metaphor to promote problem solving and communication skills. Each team is given a bag containing the catapult parts but without instructions or any indication of what the finished product looks like. Every member of the team is then provided with one or more photos of small sections of the catapult, shown in close-up or from an unusual angle. The photos cannot be viewed by other members of the team rather the team must communicate with each other by describing their photos and then work out how to put the pieces together within a set time limit.

This category of team building activities was selected as they represent a reasonably common form of team building. They are also suitable for a broad spectrum of New Zealand organisations and are relatively affordable and accessible. Furthermore the use of metaphoric
team building activities means that while they provide challenges, they do not involve any physical risk taking and are therefore suitable to most New Zealand workplaces.

Two large well-known organisations were chosen for this research and, while both had slightly different objectives, both met the criteria for this research regarding incorporation of some or all of the team building objectives underpinning team building activities. In summary, both organisations’ design briefs included challenging individuals to learn more from and about their colleagues through active participation in the activities, increasing/enhancing communication skills, further developing of a sense of ‘team’, and lastly that the activities be enjoyable. The rationale for the inclusion of two organisations reflected the need to be able to make a comparative analysis. Additionally, given the large quantity of data expected to be generated through the questionnaires and in-depth personal interviews, more than two organisations would have been impractical.

While Greenberg and Baron (2008) point to several benefits resulting from team building, and Salas et al. (1999) have noted the use of team building is widespread, little is known about the benefits of utilising the type of activities which form the basis of this study. Research of this nature is important as it will contribute to the extant team building literature and be of some interest to employers contemplating various development options. The overall aim of this research is to discover what, if any, are the organisational benefits of just one type of team building available in New Zealand, specifically team building utilising metaphoric activities to reflect workplace issues. It is the participants’ perceptions of the benefits of these team building activities that this study is concerned with.
1.4 Summary

Chapter one introduced team building as an organisational development technique. The act and purpose of team building and the four elements that underpin team building were then defined. The research problem was introduced followed by the research question and sub-questions. Advantages and disadvantages of team building were also discussed, leading to the overall aim and justification for this study being revealed.

Chapter two analyses and critiques the team building literature to date, followed by a review of the various methodological approaches employed by various researchers in the field of team building. Chapter three provides the rationale for the selected methodology and outlines the data collection and analysis methods employed in this study, including the ethical implications and limitations of this research. Results of this research are discussed in chapter four, and chapter five analyses the key findings. Chapter six discusses the findings, including key insights, limitations and future research recommendations. Chapter seven summarises the overall findings of this research.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Objective and overview

The objective of this chapter is to provide a review of relevant team building literature as it relates to the overall research question which, to reiterate, is “what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?”

This chapter begins by defining team building, as it is a term widely used to describe a myriad of activities. The sections which follow review the literature surrounding the benefits of team building, which are revealed in more depth, and this is followed by a description of the four key aims of team building which also includes a section on the five stage group life cycle. The concept of organisational commitment as an ancillary benefit is discussed, along with the use of metaphors to facilitate learning and the role of an external facilitator. This chapter then concludes with a summary of various methodological approaches employed by some of the academics cited in this thesis, providing additional support for the methodology chapter that follows.

2.2 The ambiguous term ‘team building’

The increasing popularity of team building has led to an extensive collection of literature where a diverse range of descriptions is used to define a broad range of related activities. A small but by no means exhaustive search reveals various team building descriptions including; outdoor adventure management development (Ibbetson & Newell, 1998), residential outward bound courses (Rushmer, 1997), outdoor training (Mazany et al., 1995, 1997), indoor
adventure training (Broderick & Pearce, 2001), corporate adventure training programmes (Gass & Priest, 2006) and experiential learning (Rosenberg, 2007).

The numerous labels incorporate various activities which fall under the umbrella term team building, leading Salas et al., (1999) to observe that the term itself is somewhat ambiguous and is often used to describe activities that are “conceptually quite dissimilar” (p. 324). To briefly illustrate the ambiguous nature of the term, Rushmer’s (1997) study involved a three day outward bound course in the Highlands of Scotland, and was based around physically demanding tasks undertaken in the first week of a post graduate programme with the overall aim of building teams at the beginning of the course. At the other end of the spectrum Broderick and Pearce (2001) outline what, at the time and in their opinion, was a revolutionary new approach to indoor adventure training advocating the use of a theatrical experience based around a haunted house theme that would assist in developing teamwork, problem solving and communication skills.

One of the difficulties in ascertaining what, if any, benefits accrue to organisations as a result of utilising team building activities is the sheer range of activities, organisations, participants and methodologies included in team building research. The lack of robust studies on the effect and effectiveness of team building is in part due to conceptual and definitional issues and this has led to problems in evaluating the actual benefits of team building.

In terms of this research, there are two definitions of team building that most closely reflect the overall aims of the two organisations who participated in this research. The first definition, noted in the introduction describes team building as being “an investment in the people resource of an organisation” (Mazany, et al., 1997). The second definition by Toofany
(2007) points to team building being a way of “encouraging individuals to participate in activities together” (p. 27). These definitions have been selected by this researcher as the most accurate representation of the aims and objectives for both organisations involved in this research. The key objectives underpinning team building activities are now discussed as they relate to this research.

2.3 The fundamental objectives of team building

As noted in the introduction, according to several academics there are four key elements underpinning team building activities. While team building can be undertaken for a variety of reasons, in order to narrow the scope of this research and to provide greater focus and clarity, the researcher has chosen to focus on team building that includes some or all of just three of the four key objectives of team building which are defined in this section. Based on recent research, Wheelan (2005) supports the inclusion of all or any of these objectives suggesting that team building activities which include goal-setting, interpersonal relationships and feedback relating to participants’ performance and group development will work better than other approaches. Wheelan (2005) concludes that, until more research is undertaken, team building activities that include at least these three objectives are more likely to produce positive results than those that do not.

The three elements forming the rationale for the team building activities in this research are goal setting, problem solving and interpersonal relationships. The reason for this is in part based on Wheelan’s (2005) recommendations, combined with feedback elicited from various team building facilitators in the early stages of this research, regarding the most common objectives of team building activities that were of a similar type to those used in this study.
The inclusion or exclusion of some objectives concurs with Salas et al. (1999) and Robbins et al. (2008) observation that team building activities may incorporate any or all of the four fundamental objectives and that selection is entirely dependant on the needs of the organisation at the time.

Interpersonal relationships are concerned with improving team skills, such as communication, enhancing support, trust and confidence amongst team members. Team building activities can contribute to increasing and/or enhancing these skills via interactive activities which help participants overcome barriers to effective communication whilst providing opportunities for members to acknowledge their colleagues’ various styles. The underlying idea, according to Greenberg and Baron (2008) is that the participants are able to form positive relationships with one another and, as a result, the participants are in a better position to “influence each other’s potential back on the job” (p. 321). Acquiring such skills, according to Rosenberg (2007), will also enable participants to create a more productive workplace. Finally, Greenberg and Baron (2008) note the development and/or enhancement of important skills such as communication are key to organisational effectiveness, which is as previously noted one of the main objectives of organisational development initiatives.

Problem solving, according to Priest and Gass (1997), is closely related to decision making and judgement. The ability to identify problems and subsequently resolve them by ensuring that decisions made are based on sound judgement is a valuable skill in or outside of the workplace. Team building activities incorporating activities that are intentionally designed to reflect real-world challenges can often spark discussions about the many parallels found within the workplace (Rosenberg, 2007), such as the need for effective planning, or the importance of identifying problems and evaluation of subsequent solutions. Accordingly,
problem solving is included in this research, to see whether or not, the team building activities lead to any appreciable difference in identification and resolution of problems back in the workplace.

Team building that includes goal setting as an objective encourages individuals to develop individual and/or team goals by providing various tools that enable the participants to clarify and then work through ways to achieve those goals (Salas et al., 1999). According to Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe, and Waters-Marsh, (2001) the team building activities should focus on developing a shared understanding of the team mission and goals. In support of the benefits of goal setting to an organisation, Greenberg and Baron (2008) have noted successful performance within an organisation can be enhanced by goal setting.

**The effectiveness of team building**

Before we can look at the effectiveness of team building, it is first necessary to define the term effectiveness. The sheer diversity of team building activities represents one of the major challenges to making sense of the research literature on team building (Salas et al., 1999) and this is exacerbated by claims of various team building efforts being labelled as effective. What is not clear in some studies, however, is what makes team building effective, that is were the stated objectives achieved? Did the team building activities meet the expected/desired outcomes? Mazany et al. (1995) provides a succinct definition of effectiveness in terms of team building, stating that activities that can be considered effective are those that have “measurable positive outcomes that relate to defined objectives” (p. 64).
The concept of team building is certainly not new. Porras and Berg (1978) observed thirty years ago that team building was “one of the most frequently used organisational development interventions” (p. 251). Decades later, Salas and colleagues (1999) state that team building is still an “extremely popular and common intervention” (p. 309). One of the reasons for its continuing popularity may be the numerous benefits claimed as a result of engaging in team building activities. According to the literature reviewed for this research, organisational benefits include; improved decision making processes (Mazany et al., 1995), improved productivity (Svynatek et al., 1999), increased employee satisfaction (Longnecker & Neubert, 2000), improved team functioning (Klein, Salas, Burke, Goodwin, Halpin, Diazgranados and Badum 2006), enhanced interpersonal relationships (Toofany, 2007), and organisational commitment (Benson, 2006).

Despite such positive results being claimed, some academics such as Salas et al (1999) note that whilst team building may indeed be popular the actual results are often “mixed, vague or non-significant” (p. 309). Claims of increased performance as a result of team building, for example, lead Salas and colleagues (1999) to contend that due to the sheer diversity of team building activities available, the variety of organisations involved, and the various methodologies employed, very little empirical evidence actually exists to support such a claim. The Salas et al. (1999) observations echo those of earlier researchers, including Woodman and Sherwood (1980), DeMeuse and Liebowitz (1981), Druckman and Bjork (1994), Smither, Houston and McIntire (1996), who concluded after reviewing various academic papers regarding increased performance as a result of team building, that whilst positive results were reported, there was in fact no definitive evidence to support the claims made. Several years later, Sundstrom et al. (1990) and Tannenbaum, Beard and Salas (1992) conducted another review of studies relating to increased performance resulting from team
building and found that, despite enthusiastic reports, there was again a lack of compelling evidence to support beneficial effects of team building on performance. Salas et al. (1999) included these observations in their meta-analytic study regarding the effect of team building on performance, noting that the initial literature review produced a “remarkable lack of convergence” (p. 312) on what studies should be included.

The overall aim of Svyantek et al. (1999) meta-analysis was to assess the relationship between organisational characteristics and team building success with a specific focus on if/how team building impacts on workgroup productivity and effectiveness. While Svyantek et al (1999) did not specify what type of team building activities were used by each of the studies included, their selection criteria included team building incorporating goal setting, problem solving, interpersonal relationships and role clarity which, according to Beer, (1976), Dyer, (1977), Buller, (1986), Sundstrom et al. (1990), are the four key aims or underlying reasons for utilising team building activities. Other than the four aims noted above, Svyantek et al. (1999) final criteria stipulated that each of the studies to be included must have reported some change in objective productivity. Subjective estimates regarding productivity made by one of the group members involved in the team building or external to the group undergoing the team building was also acceptable. This resulted in 11 studies being selected for inclusion in the meta-analysis. The studies were drawn from a diverse range of industries such as mining, armed forces, assembly line workers, universities, and manufacturing plants. A positive change in productivity was measured by objective measures such as production quality (mining) and quality units and cost efficiency (assembly line workers). The subjective changes were measured by perceptions of group/individual/organisation/management effectiveness. The study noted several moderating variables which, in conjunction with the team building activities, were important; management support for the team building activities,
the use of other interventions in conjunction with the team building, the size and type of the organisation. In terms of the team building process, Svyantek et al (1999) concluded that a combination of goal setting and interpersonal relationships (which included problem solving and role clarity) had a higher average effect than those team building efforts that had a singular focus, for example goal setting. Team building using an external as opposed to internal facilitator also showed a significant average effect size, although the use of both an internal and external showed an even higher level of significance. The overall findings of the study supported Svyantek et al. (1999) hypothesis that team building in conjunction with the important variables as described in their study is effective in increasing workgroup productivity.

Based on previous research indicating that little, if any, conclusive evidence existed to support the contention that team building renders an increase in team performance, Salas and colleagues (1999) undertook a meta-analysis to assess the effect of team building on performance. As noted earlier, the diversity of team building activities represents one of the major challenges in making sense of the literature. Salas et al. (1999) however regarded such diversity as “a unique opportunity to gauge the relative impact of the four areas of team building” (p. 315). As such, these four areas formed the basic criteria for their meta-analysis and Salas et al. (1999) noted that this was an important goal of their research in trying to determine the relative contributions of those four areas to the team building performance effect. In order to do so, the study looked at several performance measures that had been used in earlier studies, such as team size and duration. Salas et al. (1999) stated that the key finding to emerge was the “overall insignificant and negligible effect of team building on performance” (p. 322). This study supported much of the earlier research by academics such as Druckman and Bjork (1994) who noted that the enthusiasm for the use of team building
activities to increase or enhance team performance “was not matched by strong empirical support for their effect on team performance” (p. 125). In terms of the overall effectiveness of team building, Smither, et al (1996) observed “research findings on the effectiveness of team building provide a complex mix of results that make drawing firm conclusions difficult” (p. 324).

Klein and colleagues (2006) meta-analysis examined the relationship between team training and team building in order to ascertain which strategy would be the most effective. Klein and colleagues assessed forty-eight empirical studies and concluded that both are successful across a wide range of settings, tasks and team types. Klein et al (2006) found reasonably strong support for the use of team building in improving team functioning. However, Klein et al. (2006) do add that despite the encouraging results, a note of caution is advised as definitive conclusions could not be drawn from some of the studies included.

Mazany and colleagues (1995) research focused on evaluating the effectiveness of an outdoor team building programme. Mazany et al (1995) noted that, while much of the published material to date (at that time) provided numerous suggestions on how to maximise the effectiveness of team building activities, none had actually pointed to any objective measures of effectiveness. Mazany et al. (1995) research focused on the use of a team building workshop which formed part of the overall orientation process for all students involved in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. A three day programme consisted of a mix of indoor and outdoor activities that were designed to provide opportunities for both team and personal development. The participants completed questionnaires during and at the conclusion of the programme relating to satisfaction with the programme, how well the team communicated and worked together, and whether or not individuals felt actively involved in
the process. Mazany et al. (1995) concluded that despite variations in the outdoor workshops and the questionnaire, the effect of the workshop on team development was positive. However they did go on to note that, while the techniques employed in evaluating the effectiveness of the programme had some merit, more effective techniques should be investigated.

A study by Rushmer (1997) also focused on MBA students participating in a three day outdoor team building programme. Rushmer (1997) notes that, from observation, students who are quickly able to integrate into the MBA group are more likely to successfully complete the intensive one year course, hence the provision of team building at the beginning of the academic year. Twenty-two participants were divided into three teams and were questioned prior to and at the end of each day’s activities, in order to ascertain whether anything had changed regarding themselves or their teams. Rushmer (1997) participated in the activities, as well as observing and conducting personal interviews and administering the questionnaires. Whilst Rushmer (1997) points out that the study only provides a snapshot, and that the research was to be converted to a longitudinal study at a later date, the students’ responses indicated an overall positive experience with the team building activities. Specifically, Rushmer (1997) suggests that team building activities that enable participants to mix freely and get to know one another in a relaxed environment, and that encourage all participants to contribute equally toward accomplishing tasks, are more likely to encourage participants to continue working as a team upon completion of the team building activities. In addition, Rushmer also suggests “restricting the formal appearance of hierarchy (in the form of a leader) in the team” (p. 325). This allows the participants to all contribute equally, with members of the team agreeing and supporting, prior to each task, the person who is deemed to be the most appropriate person to guide or direct the team through the task.
2.4 Organisational commitment

Many academics have noted that a well facilitated team building intervention can be instrumental in gaining and/or enhancing the employees’ level of organisational commitment, and this is supported by academics such as Meyer and Smith, (2000), Bartlett, (2001), Tansky and Cohen, (2001) and Benson (2006), who observe employee satisfaction with development opportunities in general is positively related to organisational commitment. According to Benson (2006), this relationship is based on theories of employee development that generally assume that employees who are satisfied with development opportunities are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes towards their organisation. Thus an organisation investing in employee development demonstrates a commitment to their employees which in turn is reciprocated by the employee (Benson, 2006).

Organisational Commitment has been defined as the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in their organisation. (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1979; Miner, 1992). Greenberg and Baron (2008) build on this definition, adding that the level of organisational commitment is demonstrated by the individual’s involvement in their organisation and their unwillingness to leave. Affective commitment is defined by Greenberg and Baron (2008) as the extent to which an individual identifies with the organisation’s overall values and goals. This is relevant in the context of this study as the organisational benefits of affective commitment by employees have been well documented (Arnold & MacKenzie, 1999). Considerable evidence has shown that affective commitment to an organisation is negatively associated with voluntary turnover (Williams & Anderson, 1991; Arnold & MacKenzie, 1999) and positively associated with work performance (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Furthermore, according to Williams and Anderson (1991), affective
commitment contributes to higher work effectiveness and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) along with lower absentee rates. Conversely, Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) note that the absence of commitment can reduce organisational effectiveness.

As the overarching aim of organisational development is to improve or enhance organisational effectiveness and employee well-being (Robbins et al., 2008), it would be remiss in a study investigating what, if any, organisational benefits are gained by utilising team building to omit organisational commitment. As noted in the introduction, a change, if any, in the levels of employee commitment as a consequence of the team building activities would be a beneficial outcome for the organisations involved in this research, in addition to being of some interest to employers assessing various organisational development options.

2.5 Using metaphoric activities to facilitate learning

The ultimate goal of using metaphoric activities is to enhance understanding of workplace issues (Priest & Gass, 1997). Structured metaphoric learning refers to intentionally designing or framing the activity prior to participation in a way which increases the probability of seeing the parallels between metaphoric activities and the workplace (Priest and Gass, 1997; Rosenberg, 2007). According to Rosenberg (2007), metaphoric activities should “spark discussion about the parallels within the workplace” (p. 27). Metaphoric activities may be used to highlight workplace issues such as problem solving, overcoming barriers to effective communication and building interpersonal relationships.
Mazany et al (1995) note that one of the key benefits of using metaphoric activities is the fact that when individuals engage in such activities they tend to act in a similar manner to how they would act at work, displaying such characteristics as co-operation, communication and leadership. Mazany et al (1995) go on to note that such characteristics can be then be discussed using specific reference to the activity as a metaphor for normal work circumstances, which in turn enables the participants to learn about themselves and their colleagues in a more positive, fun and constructive environment.

While almost any activity could be used a metaphor for the workplace, Ibbetson and Newell (1998) make a distinction between activities such as abseiling or rock climbing that typically require higher levels of physicality, and metaphoric exercises that are typically less physical and can be undertaken in almost any location. According to Ibbetson and Newell (1998), activities such as abseiling or rock climbing require very little review as the activities are “assumed to speak for themselves” (p. 240), whereas metaphoric activities are simply used as a “vehicle to highlight processes which are then the subject of a review led by the facilitator” (p. 240).

To briefly illustrate, a classic example of a metaphoric activity is the spider’s web. Participants are required to strategically pass their team through a rope web made up of different size holes and varying levels above the ground. This activity encourages participants to work together in order to get from one side of the web to the other without touching the ropes. This activity, according to Gass and Dobkin (1992), can be constructed around several metaphors which in turn form the basis for a group debriefing which encourages the participants to reflect on the activity and then discuss the parallels between the exercise and their workplace.
2.6 The role of an external facilitator

While the overall aim of this research was not to assess the role of an external facilitator, it is a related issue and therefore worthy of discussion. Early researchers in the field of team building included in their team building definitions the use of a third party facilitator, noting that they played a critical role (Woodman & Sherwood, 1980; De Meuse & Liebowitz 1981; Buller, 1986). Woodman and Sherwood (1980) observed that the role of a facilitator is to provide guidance and suggestions, rather than solutions or recommendations. Bens (2005) provides support for these early researchers, noting the role of a facilitator as someone whose prime goal is to support and enable others as they pursue their objectives, with the overall goal of enhanced group effectiveness.

Wheelan (2005) observes that, in terms of facilitated team building, the quality and duration of experiences can be as diverse as the range of team building activities on offer. The literature reviewed for this study included team building activities of varying duration, however it would appear that less has been written regarding the quality of team building experiences. Priest and Gass (1997) are two leading authors in the field of outdoor adventure team building programmes, and emphasise the importance of utilising experienced facilitators to improve the quality of team building experiences. Priest and Gass (1997) state that facilitators should have sufficient knowledge and experience in team building, adding that proper assessment is also crucial to enable the facilitator to design a programme that is suited to each client’s unique needs.

In collating relevant literature to be included in this review, it is evident that many academics support the use of an external facilitator. However, Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) adopt an
opposing view. They suggest that typical team building efforts are ineffective for a number of reasons, with the most important being the use of an external facilitator. According to Mealiea and Baltazar (2005), the problem with using an external facilitator is their unfamiliarity with the characteristics of the business. The authors state that team building activities should be conducted preferably by the training and/or development manager, and should be undertaken on site, pointing out that there is no value to be gained working in an environment that bears no relationship to the workplace. While this may be the case in some industries, or even the preference of some employers, Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) suggestions run contrary to those espoused by many academics in the field of team building, as noted in this section. Their views supporting the role of an external facilitator are further discussed in the discussion chapter.

2.7 Tuckman’s model of team development

Finally, this literature review would not be complete without discussing the concept of team development as described by Tuckman over forty years ago (Robbins, et al, 2008). Tuckman’s original model of team development incorporates five stages; forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The first stage is characterised by doubt and hesitation. As the individuals within the group get to know one another and strategies and rules are discussed, individuals tend to vie for roles within the group and the second stage is often characterised by friction and conflict between the individuals. If the group emerges relatively unscathed from the storming stages, the group is able to move onto the norming stage which is characterised by the individuals developing respect and understanding for one another. In other words, the group begins to exhibit a sense of cohesiveness. The fourth stage of performing is characterised by the group performing tasks as a cohesive unit. Adjourning
refers to the group completing the task or project and is, at this stage, concerned with making final arrangements for the dissolution of the group.

Robbins et al. (2001) state that there is no standard process or length of time for teams to move through the stages, and that while some teams may race through all the stages, some teams may shift between just two of three of the stages without reaching the final stage. Greenberg and Baron (2008) suggest the model is best thought of as a “general framework of group formation” (p. 296). This is due to the fact that the model does not account for organisational context. According to Robbins et al (2001), a strong organisational context provides employees with the rules, roles and resources to enable a group to perform the task of project effectively. Having a strong organisational context means that a group does not need to develop strategies, or decide on who is best suited to roles within the group, or locate and then allocate the resources necessary to perform the task at hand. As Robbins et al (2001) note, “since much group behaviour takes place within a strong organisational context…the model may have limited applicability in understanding work groups” (p. 274). One of the studies cited in this research indicates that effective team development can assist a team to move quickly through the five stage life cycle (Mazany et al., 1995) and, as this research is based on team building, the researcher feels there is some merit in including this model in the literature review as it remains an interesting tool in observing how individuals negotiate their way through the various stages of group formation.
2.8 Methodological approaches employed in team building research

The team building literature reviewed for this research revealed a multitude of methodological approaches across an equally broad range of industries involving a variety of participants and organisational objectives. For instance, the study by Mazany et al., (1995) employed a predominantly quantitative approach supported by ad hoc interviews to investigate the hypothesis that an outdoor team building workshop involving Master of Business Administration (MBA) students would positively impact on team development. Mazany et al. concluded that the measured effects were enduring and that, although minor changes to the structure of the questionnaires was recommended, the selected methodology was effective.

Rushmer (1997) also conducted a study of MBA students engaging in a three day outward bound team building programme, but opted for a predominantly qualitative approach using open-ended questionnaires (daily) and participant observation. Rushmer’s overall aim was to provide a snapshot account of the team building programme in the form of a case study approach which would then be converted to a longitudinal study. Rushmer (1997) concluded that the positive findings as noted earlier were convincing, despite the limitations on generalising as is typical of case studies.

A case study methodology was also adopted by Ibbetson and Newell (1998) in order to compare the effectiveness of a team building programme involving twenty-two managers from two different organisations using the same external facilitator. Collection of quantitative and qualitative data was aided by the use of previously validated questionnaires along with personal and group interviews. Ibbetson and Newell (1998) concluded that, whilst
generalisations could not be made, the case studies showed that perceived positive aspects of the programmes had been actively transferred back to the workplace.

Salas et al., (1999) undertook a meta-analysis of team building studies in order to gauge the relative impact of the four team building objectives on performance. Salas et al. excluded case studies and any other studies that reported positive outcomes without providing any objective data to support the findings. Salas and colleagues (1999) noted that, whilst they provided interesting reading, they did not offer definitive or conclusive evidence to support the use of team building in enhancing or increasing workplace performance. Salas et al. (1999) inclusion criteria eventually yielded a total of 11 studies that were “optimally homogeneous in methodological terms” (p. 318). With the exception of role clarity impacting positively on performance, their results showed an “overall insignificant and negligible effect of team building on performance” (p. 322). A later meta-analysis was undertaken by Klein et al. (2006) examining the relationship between team training and team building activities and their impact on team functioning. Klein et al. (2006) concluded that, overall, the results suggested a positive relationship between team building and improved team functioning.

A meta-analysis approach was also used by Svyantek et al. (1999) to assess the relationship between organisational characteristics and team building success. Svyantek et al. (1999) inclusion criteria stipulated the team building studies must include a combination of goal setting, interpersonal relationships, and problem solving, and be conducted in a business or government setting. Subjects of the meta-analysis included hard rock miners, army team members, air force cadets, MBA students, and manufacturing technicians and managers. Svyantek et al. (1999) study supported their contention that team building positively impacts on workgroup productivity.
2.9 Summary

This chapter has reviewed and discussed several areas pertaining to this research, commencing with the ambiguity of the term team building. This ambiguity is in part due to conceptual and definitional issues, which makes identifying actual organisational benefits difficult. According to the literature reviewed, it appears that organisational benefits are more likely to be gained by incorporation of some or all of the key objectives underpinning team building activities. To that end, interpersonal skills, goal setting, and problem solving were discussed along with support from academics who point to the value of acquiring interpersonal, goal setting and problem solving skills. Greenberg and Baron (2008) noted that the development of interpersonal skills enabled employees to influence each other’s potential upon returning to the workplace. Rosenberg (2007) also noted that the development of interpersonal relationships assists in creating a more productive workplace. Greenberg and Baron (2008) stated that successful performance within the workplace can be enhanced by the setting of goals and Priest and Gass (1997) observed that problem solving is closely linked to decision making and judgment and is a valuable skill in or out of the workplace.

Organisational commitment was discussed as a potential ancillary benefit with several academics supporting the notion that an organisation investing in employee development demonstrates a commitment to their employees which in turn is reciprocated by the employee (Benson, 2006). The use of activities that are metaphorically analogous to the workplace were defined and discussed. This was followed by a discussion regarding the role of an external facilitator. This was followed by a discussion regarding Tuckman’s five stage life cycle model of team development. Finally, a summary of various methodological approaches employed by
team building researchers was discussed with the aim of providing some background for the selection of the methodology for this research, which is covered in the following chapter.

In summary, it would appear from the literature reviewed that team building activities can result in organisational benefits. This literature review has revealed several gaps in extant literature, for example; does age or gender have any impact (positive or negative) on employees engaging in team building. Are metaphoric activities more or less likely to result in benefits being accrued to the organisation, such as the ones discussed in the literature review? As noted at the start of this review, the conceptual and definitional issues that surround team building studies makes this a difficult area at best to research. The main aim of this research is to assess what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building using activities that are analogous to workplace issues, and it may just be possible that the participants themselves may be able to provide some answers to the questions above.
3. **Methodology**

3.1 **Objective and overview**

Although research is central to many business and academic processes, there is no consensus of how exactly it should be defined (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar & Newton, 2002; Collis & Hussey, 2003). However, there appears to be agreement that research is a process of enquiry and investigation, is organised and logical, and contributes to extant knowledge (Amaratunga et al., 2002; Collis & Hussey, 2003).

This chapter aims to provide the rationale for the selection of the methodology and the methods used to explore the research question; ‘what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?’

Yin (2003) describes research design as the “logic that links the data to be collected (and conclusions be drawn) to the initial questions of study” (p. 19). In order to ensure a logical research design was selected for this study, research philosophies are defined and discussed, and current research methods and methodologies are explored, along with those employed in similar team building research which were discussed at the end of the literature review. This chapter then discusses the methods of data collection, including the sample selection, questionnaire and personal interview selection and process, and the subsequent analysis techniques employed.
3.2 Research philosophies - positivistic and phenomenological

Broadly speaking, academic research is based on two main philosophies referred to as positivist and phenomenological (MacLean, 2006; Collis & Hussey, 2003). Both of the philosophies provide a framework regarding the methods and techniques for conducting research (Collis & Hussey, 2003). The positivistic paradigm is primarily concerned with an objective, scientific approach to research, employing quantitative methods of data collection typically subject to some form of statistical measurement (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

Historically, natural scientists favoured an objective, logical approach which allowed the investigator to remain entirely independent of the research subject, thus avoiding any possibility of personal values or bias to influence subsequent outcomes (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

Following the emergence of social sciences at the end of the nineteenth century, and in the absence of any alternative philosophies at the time, scientists continued employing a positivistic philosophy, arguing that the same laws which apply to natural sciences could equally be applied to the study of human action and behaviour (Collis & Hussey, 2003). However, some researchers criticised positivism, observing that the use of a philosophy which was solely concerned with the physical sciences could not accurately capture human actions and behaviour which are founded on individual perceptions of reality, thus making them inherently subjective (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Hence the emergence of the phenomenological philosophy which tends to be more subjective and humanistic, concerned primarily with the understanding of human behaviour “from the participant’s own frame of reference” (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 53).
Collis and Hussey (2003) note it is best to regard the two main paradigms as “the two extremes of a continuum” (p. 48) and that very few people elect to operate solely within the confines of either. Many academics have described a positivistic approach as quantitative and a phenomenological approach as qualitative, although some academics consider it a fallacy to do so, while others believe that the two can crossover (Budd, 2005; Collis & Hussey, 2003). In order to provide clarity and to avoid misinterpretation of various meanings that are often ascribed to the literary expressions, the terms quantitative and qualitative will be used from this point on, except when referring to researchers that prefer different terminology.

In order to provide not only greater context for the team building studied in this research but to capture the perceptions of the participants, in-depth collection of both quantitative and qualitative data was deemed necessary. This is supported by Rushmer (1997) who makes a pertinent point that utilising statistical methods alone to measure the effectiveness of team building may not be the best approach, noting “the nature of the phenomenon under investigation itself or the circumstances under which data are collected is not amenable to that kind of analysis”. Rushmer (1997) concluded that using a “hard measure of a soft intervention is inappropriate” (p. 316).

Academics such as Collis and Hussey (2003), observe that the research question itself often guides the researcher to the most suitable philosophy, and subsequently the methodology. As noted in the introduction, the research question essentially evolved and was further defined during the process of the initial background research, but was deliberately formulated to be open-ended, whilst still providing a focus on the phenomena of team building. The reason for this was to avoid the possibility of restricting any other lines of enquiry (Collis & Hussey, 2003). In addition to the main research question several sub-questions were also posed, which
rather than constraining the research, delineated the focus of this study. This practice, according to Creswell (1994) and Collis and Hussey (2003), is in line with an overall phenomenological approach.

A case study approach is an example of a phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 1994; Collis and Hussey, 1994; Yin, 2003). Case studies are drawn from real-life situations presenting an in-depth analysis of one setting (Robbins et al 2008). Hartley (1994) observes case studies provide an ideal strategy when one wishes to “understand everyday practices which would not perhaps be revealed in brief contact” (p. 214). Hartley’s (1994) observation is supported by Yin (2003) who notes that, in order to gain an understanding of events, case studies include direct observation of the events and interviews with the participants involved. Including direct observation and personal interview is a feature of case studies and as such they tend to produce data which is more “detailed, varied and extensive” (Neuman, 2000, p. 32). Collis and Hussey (2003) also note the use of a case study is particularly useful when the importance of the context is essential to the overall research.

Although Yin (2003) argues that in general ‘what’ questions can be answered using other research strategies, Collis and Hussey (2003) and Creswell (1994) state that it is entirely appropriate to begin a phenomenological research question with ‘what’ or ‘how’. Yin (2003) does however add that “if the research is concerned with needing to know how or why a programme has worked (or not) a case study is entirely appropriate” (p 7). The ‘how and why’ aspects of this study are particularly important, how were the activities facilitated, how well did the activities link to the design brief. The ‘why’ answers questions such as why/why not did the programme work, did it engage the participants? Did the programme provide opportunities for the design brief objectives to be met?
3.3 Methodological triangulation

Triangulation essentially refers to the use of two or more approaches, methods and techniques of data collection within the same study (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Put simply, methodological triangulation involves using data from multiple sources.

Whilst some academics argue that there are distinct boundaries between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, others believe that there is often a blurring between the two. Yet others question whether they should be considered separate entities at all (Eldabi, Irani, Paul, & Love, 2002). Casell, Buehring, Symon and Johnson (2006) and Collis and Hussey (2003) note that it is entirely possible to conduct qualitative research under a positivistic paradigm. A key point in terms of enhancing one’s research by the use of one or more methods of data collection is made by Cahill (1996) who observes that “qualitative techniques can bring quantitative information to life” (p. 16).

In terms of this research, quantitative data was collected via the use of design briefs and a questionnaire. The questionnaire provided biographical demographics, responses to a set of questions regarding individual perceptions of the team building activities. In addition a small amount of qualitative data was gathered by asking participants to briefly explain their responses to several questions. Additional qualitative data was obtained through observation and personal interviews. These two methods not only provided additional support for the questionnaires and the design briefs, but allowed the researcher to accurately capture and describe the context of this study, thus as noted by Cahill (1996) the quantitative data was brought to life.
3.4 Methodological selection

In summary, given the overall research aim, the need to utilise several methods of data collection in order to describe and discuss the context of this study, and the fact that two distinctly different organisations were involved, a case study approach with mixed methods was deemed to be entirely appropriate and justified. This approach is supported by Yin (2003) who advocates the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to case study development. Finally, a case study approach also allowed for a broad research question to be explored, thus ensuring that the research was not constrained by a very narrow question and therefore perhaps omit possible benefits that may have provided a greater insight into the value of team building activities.

3.5 Case study approach

The nature of this research required that the researcher understand what both organisations expected from the team building activities, specifically the objectives and aims, and this was obtained via the design briefs. Observation of the activities was also necessary in order to provide the context of this research, and to ensure that the researcher would understand any references made to the activities in both the qualitative sections of the questionnaire and the personal interviews. The use of a questionnaire provided not only demographic characteristics but also enabled the researcher to capture contextual data on a larger scale, which would not have been possible unless the researcher had interviewed each participant. The personal interviews provided the opportunity to draw out any assumptions and feelings regarding participation in the team building activities and, as noted by Cahill (1996), to bring the quantitative data to life.
Once a researcher has decided on a case study approach as being the most appropriate method to tackle the research question the next stage is to choose the case study organisation (Hartley, 1994). This study involved two organisations in order to provide contrast, which concurs with Hartley (1994) who urges the researcher to consider the intent of the case study. Does it aim to be typical of the phenomenon under investigation, or would the addition of an extra case provide additional strength to the research and also allow for contrasts to be made?

The researcher decided that, rather than approaching various organisations to see if they intended to engage in team building activities within the following two or three months, a more prudent and expeditious method would be to approach a team building facilitator and work in conjunction with them. This is in line with Hartley’s (1994) recommendation that the researcher be introduced via a third party, rather than cold-calling in order to locate suitable case study organisations. The first step was to make enquiries as to suitably qualified facilitators who would also be willing to assist the researcher. A well-known Auckland-based team building facilitator who is known to the researcher was initially approached for advice and possible recommendations of suitable facilitators. Following that advice the researcher met with the recommended facilitator who fortuitously expressed a willingness to be involved and agreed to contact the researcher should a potentially suitable organisation be identified.

A meeting was then set up between the researcher and the external facilitator to discuss the research criteria and the types of organisations that might be suitable. The suitability of the organisations concurs with Hartley (1994) who notes that, no matter how the case studies are located, it is important that the researcher is clear about what kind of organisation would fit the research criteria.
The case study selection criteria for this study are as follows:

- The objectives must include one or more of the three key objectives (problem-solving, interpersonal skills, goal setting).

- Team building utilising metaphoric team building activities.

- Fully facilitated by a professional and experienced external team building provider.

- A minimum of half a day in duration.

The inclusion of one or more of the three key objectives is based on Wheelan’s (2005) recommendations that activities that include goal setting and interpersonal relationships, combined with feedback regarding participants performance and development, are more likely to produce positive results than those that do not.

Metaphoric activities, as previously noted, are used to reflect and subsequently generate discussion regarding situations or issues that are analogous to the work place such as problem solving, communication and interpersonal skills. The use of an external facilitator was two-fold. One, as noted it was thought to be a more prudent approach to locating suitable organisations for this case study, and secondly Basham, Appleton and Dykeman (2004) recommend using an external facilitator, noting their role is critical in facilitating team building activities.
In order to provide for a sufficient amount of time for participants to engage in several activities it was felt that a minimum of half a day would be required. This choice was supported by the external facilitator who noted that half a day to one full day of team building activities were the most commonly requested. The mix of organisational staff was at the discretion of the organisation, however the participants did represent a reasonable mix of demographics and management levels within each organisation.

Once the case study organisations had been selected and had agreed to participate in this research, the next stage according to Hartley (1994) was to ensure attention was given to maintaining access. This was achieved via email and telephone calls to the managers responsible for training and development to first thank them for allowing access, followed by forwarding the paperwork - questionnaires, personal interview schedules and details of the research - to allow the training and development managers to gain an overall view of the thesis topic and what would be expected from both organisations. This was much appreciated by the managers, and also contributed to establishing a good working relationship with both.

Case studies often rely predominantly on qualitative data, which according to Collis & Hussey (2003) can sometimes be distinguished by low reliability. This was expected, as each of the two groups who participated in the team building activities comprised different organisations, skill levels, gender, ethnicity and age. In addition, each team building intervention was a unique occurrence and therefore could never be replicated exactly. In order to enhance the reliability of this research, a rigorous research design was undertaken, involving trialing both the questionnaire and personal interview questions in order to ensure that the questions were not ambiguous and would produce responses which would provide quality data for this study. Validity was expected to be high, defined as the “extent to which
the research findings accurately represent what is really happening in the situation” (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 357). This is an especially pertinent point in this research, and played a significant role in the selection of a case study approach.

### 3.6 Methods of data collection

The questionnaires were completed by the participants four weeks after completion of the team building activities. The reason for this is supported by a study of a team building programme conducted by Ibbetson and Newell (1998). They noted that post-event responses were “artificially inflated” (p. 253) due to the participants’ extremely positive feelings at the completion of an enjoyable and successful group experience. The phenomenon was also noted in another team building study and was referred to as “post group euphoria” (Marsh, Richards & Barnes, 1986, p. 197).

Following the questionnaires being e-mailed to the participants, the individuals who volunteered for personal interviews were contacted and interviewed. The final two interviews were held with the managers responsible for organising the team building activities. The questions pertained to whether they thought the team building activities were successful in terms of benefits to the organisation including anticipated/unanticipated benefits, disadvantages and/or negative affects.

### Sample selection

As previously noted, the two case study organisations who met the research criteria were initially approached by the facilitator who provided details of the research to create buy-in.
Once the organisations had agreed to participate the researcher provided full details and requirements regarding what would be expected from the organisation and the participants. Of particular interest to the researcher was the fact that both of the case study organisations are well-known New Zealand companies, both employ in excess of 1000 people and are committed to on-going training and development, and it was expected that they would provide a good contrast with one another.

No participant was known personally to the researcher, neither had the researcher had any previous contact with either of the two organisations involved in this research. The researcher was only initially aware of how many participants would be involved, what level the majority of participants occupied within each organisation, details of the design brief, and the duration of the team building activities, all of which met the research criteria.

**Design brief**

The external facilitator discussed the requirements of the team building activities with both of the participating organisations, leading to a design brief being submitted by the external facilitator for approval by the organisations’ managers responsible for training and development. Once the design briefs were accepted, the facilitator (with the researcher present) met with members of the team who would be involved in the facilitation of the activities. This enabled the team to discuss the brief and pinpoint any potential wrinkles in the planning and implementation stages.
Observation

Observation formed one of the data collection methods in this research. Patton (1990) provides support for observational evaluation, noting it allows for a “variety of information from different perspectives to emerge” (p. 59). Senecal, Loughead and Bloom (2008) also support observational evaluation, noting it provides a better understanding of the context in which the team-building activities occurred. Prior to commencing the observational evaluation of the participating organisations, the researcher spent some time observing similar activities (alongside the team-building facilitator used in the case studies) in order to gain further insight into activities that were similar to those proposed for the two organisations involved in this study, and to guide the development of both the questionnaire and the semi-structured personal interview questions that were to be used during the actual case studies.

The researcher was present for both of the organisations’ team building activities and was introduced to both groups. The researcher then briefly re-iterated the purpose of the research and emphasised that the researcher was present only to observe the activities in order to provide background information for the study and to enable the researcher to appreciate comments made in the questionnaires and personal interviews regarding references to particular activities.

In addition the participants were informed that no notes would be taken during the observation period. The reason for this was the researcher did not want the participants to feel they were being observed as laboratory rats which may have made some participants very uncomfortable. It was also hoped that this might lessen the possibility of social desirability bias, which in essence pertains to individuals exhibiting behaviour that they perceive to be
more socially desirable or acceptable (Greenberg & Baron, 2008.). The researcher instead made brief notes on the activities away from the groups during tea and lunch breaks.

**Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire instrument was developed by the researcher and was based on the research question as well as key points uncovered in the team building literature. The questionnaire included four areas in which the participants were invited to make brief comments expanding on particular questions, thus providing qualitative information that may not have been gathered without interviewing each individual. The questionnaire document was designed by the researcher with the aid of Microsoft Word. The final copy was formatted by an external agency in order to ensure a professional appearance.

The three questions regarding different levels of organisational commitment were based on the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al (1979). The completed questionnaire was then trialled amongst a mixed group of individuals (10) known to the researcher to ensure there were no ambiguous or non-relevant questions in the final copy.

The questionnaire predominantly used a 5 point Likert scale method (1: strongly agree, 2 agree, 3: neither agree nor disagree 4: disagree, 5: strongly disagree). The use of this scale is supported by Roland, Wagner and Weigand (1995) who state that Likert scale questionnaires are the most commonly used as they are “quantifiable and subject to easy interpretation” (p.123). Utilising a 5 point scale rather than a 7 point scale was due to the fact that the researcher believed it would unnecessarily complicate completing the questionnaire as the two
additional options would be asking similar questions and their subsequent omission would not negatively impact on the final analysis.

Qualitative comments were also sought in response to five questions and additional space was provided where appropriate on the questionnaire. The gathering of additional information in this manner is supported by Roland et al. (1995) who state it is helpful in further interpretation of data from a questionnaire.

The questionnaire began with brief instructions, including the choice of returning the questionnaire via electronic mail (e-mail) or by post. The first section pertained to the participants’ demographics; gender, age, highest academic qualification, length of tenure. This information was required in order to frame participants’ responses. Lee (1999) recommends the demographic section being placed at the beginning of the questionnaire in order to ease participants into the questionnaire. The inclusion of demographics concurs with Becker (1992) who noted the importance of including demographic variables as prior research has tied them to the “phenomena of commitment” (p. 238).

Section two began with questions that were designed to elicit general views on the team building activities including levels of motivation, job performance and perceptions of how the team building impacted on the workplace. The following section involved questions regarding communication, trust and understanding of colleagues. Section four was concerned with commitment to the organisation, and section five asked questions relating to goal setting. The final section focused on problem solving, and then asked three questions requiring brief written responses, regarding perceived benefits resulting from the team building activities,
what their initial thoughts were when told of the upcoming team building activities, and whether or not their views had altered as a result of participation in the activities.

**Personal interviews**

As the sample population was relatively small, it was decided that three personal interviews in addition to the training and development manager from each organisation would provide sufficient contextual data and be representative of the overall participant population. At the completion of the team building activities the researcher thanked all the participants for allowing the researcher to observe the activities. Following this, and with the researcher absent, the facilitator asked if any participants would like to volunteer for personal interviews to be conducted four weeks after the team building at a time that was mutually suitable.

Several individuals from each case study organisation completed personal interview consent forms. As the facilitator was not aware of the number of personal interviews required when the completed forms were collected, the facilitator notified the participants that forms would be randomly selected and those individuals selected would be contacted within three weeks in order to organise suitable times for interviewing the following week. The facilitator also thanked all those who had agreed to interviews on behalf of the researcher. As it was a random selection, of the eight participants (including the two training and development managers who had organised the team building activities) five were Auckland based, one was in the Bay of Plenty and two were from Palmerston North.
Due to financial and temporal constraints, several factors needed to be considered. As the researcher is Auckland based, and given the possibility that there may have been last minute cancellations/postponements either by the participant or the airlines, it was decided to interview participants outside of Auckland via telephone. Although this is not ideal, as face-to-face interviews may have provided perhaps a little more information in terms of facial expressions, a compromise needed to be made with regards to the above considerations.

When the interview phase of this research commenced, only one participant was unavailable from FizzCo. As FizzCo had 21 participants, it was felt that three interviews in total would be sufficiently representative in the final analysis, thus a fourth interviewee was not sought.

**Questionnaire data collection process**

The original method called for questionnaires to be delivered to the workplace and collected by the researcher one month after the completion of the team building activities. However both organisations expressed a preference for questionnaires to be emailed, allowing the participants to reply in their own time but before the due date, rather than being under pressure to complete whilst the researcher was present. The researcher was more than happy with this arrangement. As already noted, one of the organisations is based in Palmerston North and the researcher is Auckland based, and the time and cost incurred would have been prohibitive.

The questionnaires were emailed via a third party computer using a third party address, and two return options were given on the first page of the questionnaire - email or post. The questionnaires received via the third party email were stripped of identifying features such as
the respondents’ email address, and were then printed and passed to the researcher. The one questionnaire received via post was given to the researcher after being checked by a third party to ensure there were no identifying features, such as a personal note or return address included and this was then passed onto the researcher.

Each of the questionnaires was allocated a number and either an A or B corresponding to which of the two organisations the questionnaire was received from, and a number corresponding to the order they were received by the third party email receiver. The questionnaires were then passed to the researcher. The questionnaires were then entered into two separate Excel files labelled A and B. Each file comprised three sheets, one for demographics, the second for the Likert scale responses, and the third sheet for the qualitative replies. The allocation of numbers was used as an identifying feature when comparing data, and also in referencing any comments in the thesis, for example; “Participant 4 from Org A noted…”.

**Interview data collection process**

A covering letter was given to each of the participants prior to commencing the interview. Details included how any information provided would be kept confidential, and an assurance that neither the individual nor their organisation would be identified in this research. Lee (2000) notes, that as there is almost always an unequal power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, the means by which the interviewer frames the interview becomes critical to its success. Following Lee’s (2000) recommendations, the researcher began by thanking and acknowledging the participants’ contribution to this study, followed by an overview of the interview agenda. The approximate length of the interview and the fact that it
would be taped and transcribed was discussed, along with the broad questions likely to be addressed. The researcher then re-iterated the research question, the broad aim of the research, and that a few minutes would be allocated to summarising the interview which would allow the participant to add anything that may have come to mind over the course of the interview. This was followed by reminding the participants that they were able to withdraw from the study for any reason by emailing the researcher within two weeks of the interview taking place.

Participants were also advised that they were able to request a final summary report by emailing the researcher with ‘final summary report’ as the subject title. Finally, the participants were asked to sign a consent form acknowledging they had had all relevant information communicated to them and that they were happy to be interviewed. An unsigned copy was also left with each interviewee with the researchers’ email details.

The personal interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format which, as previously mentioned, had been trialled prior to the interviews to ensure that the design would elicit relevant data and that the questions were not ambiguous. Furthermore, the semi-structured nature of the questions allowed the researcher some flexibility. Whilst the interviews were being recorded the researcher also took notes by hand, which aided in guiding the interview, and also allowed the researcher to return to various themes that were mentioned, or to ask the participant to clarify or elaborate on certain points being discussed.

Two interview schedules (Appendices B & C) were used, enabling the researcher to ask the participants relevant questions. The second one was used to obtain different data from the training and development managers including such questions as why they chose to engage in
team building and their observations of the team building activities from an organisational viewpoint.

**Data analysis - questionnaires**

The demographics were put into a graph format in order to provide an overall visual picture of the participants. Each of the Likert scale sections were converted to a percentage point and shown in bar graphs, once again to allow for a visual representation and straightforward interpretation of the figures. The charts were all accompanied with supporting text. The qualitative objectives of the questionnaire data were entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and subsequently analysed for common or emerging themes which were then ranked and placed in the results chapter following the appropriate question.

A cross-case analysis was also undertaken in order to show any significant similarities and/or differences. Comparisons of the similarities and differences using the questionnaire responses of strongly agree and agree were then shown in a horizontal bar chart in order to provide a visual aide to the accompanying text.

**Data analysis - interviews**

Interview data was analysed for emerging or interesting themes and as each theme was identified, general classifications or “broad categories of themes” (Ammeter & Dukerich, 2002, p. 4) were established. Each of the category lists contained three or four themes, reflecting common ideas or issues raised by the interviewees. A list was then compiled with each of the themes being graded, based on how many other interviewees mentioned the same
themes. The main themes then became clear and the list was reduced to a key theme list. The percentage of participants making comments related to each theme, along with examples, is provided in the discussion section.

3.7 Limitations

The questionnaire employed a forced choice method which is an acknowledged limitation of the questionnaire. The researcher also acknowledges that there is always likely to be a trade-off in the gathering of data. In order to ensure sufficient data was collected to enable a meaningful analysis, the researcher decided against including a not-applicable option in the questionnaire, thereby avoiding the possibility of nil responses. It is possible therefore that some of the responses indicated as neither agree nor disagree could have been used as a proxy for a not-applicable choice. Secondly, the phrasing of the questions/statements in some sections may have unintentionally steered some participants towards recording a more favourable response which is acknowledged as another limitation to this study. Finally, there may have been an element of social desirability bias in the personal interviews. This may have also affected the way the participants acted during the observations.

3.8 Ethical implications

In accordance with Unitec guidelines regarding ethical research, all steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the organisations involved was maintained. Both case study organisations’ training and development managers were asked to sign consent forms on behalf their organisations noting that they had had all details and
requirements of the research clearly explained to them and were happy to participate in this research.

Precautions taken to ensure the participants’ and organisations’ confidentiality and anonymity were preserved include the interview data being presented in a manner that would not potentially lead to any embarrassing information being revealed. Participation in the interviews was voluntary and all interview participants had the nature of the research fully explained to them and were then asked to consent and sign the interview schedule prior to the interviews commencing. Interview participants were also reminded that they could withdraw from the research within two weeks of the interview taking place by simply emailing the researcher and typing ‘withdraw’ as the subject line. The organisations themselves were referred to as DiggerCo and FizzCo.

The questionnaires were anonymous and received via a third-party email address completely stripped of any identifying features, and additionally respondents were given the choice of returning the questionnaires via New Zealand Post. The final summary report that will be sent to both organisations upon full completion of this thesis will be completely anonymised, ensuring that any features that would directly or indirectly identify the participants or the organisations are removed.

3.9 Summary

This section has outlined the methodology chosen for this study, followed by details regarding a case study approach and why this methodology was deemed to be appropriate and justified for this research. Details regarding how the various methods of data would be collected and
analysed were also discussed. The precautions taken to ensure that both the participants’ and the organisations’ confidentiality and anonymity were assured were detailed. Finally the limitations of this research were acknowledged.

The next chapter discusses the results of this research. Key themes are revealed and discussed leading to a summary of the research question, which to reiterate is; “What if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?”
4. Results

4.1 Objective and outline

This chapter begins by describing the background to DiggerCo and a brief synopsis of the activities. The questionnaire results are then presented, followed by the personal interviews which have been summarised. The same process is then applied to FizzCo.

A cross-case analysis is then shown in graph form, followed by a discussion regarding the key similarities and differences between the two organisations. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the key findings which are then further discussed in the next chapter.

4.2 DiggerCo - Background

Case study A is a well established, privately owned, large national company involved in road construction with approximately 1000 employees. The majority of employees within this company are male, due to the nature of the business, and this is reflected in the 100% male response rate. One female employee did participate in the team building but did not return a questionnaire. 25 of the 51 participants completed questionnaires. 48% of the participants were between 26-35 years of age, 32% were aged 36-45 and 20% were 46+ years of age.

None were aged 18-25 years as an upcoming team building programme is being planned for the ‘under 25 group’ as part of the company’s three year rotation of training and development programmes.
The majority of participants were employed in middle management (84%). 12% were senior managers and 4% were non-management. The length of tenure was varied, 36% had been with the organisation one year or less, 24% between one and three years, 20% had been employed for more than seven years and 16% had been with the company between three and five years. The balance of 4% had worked for the company for between five and seven years. Most of the managers hold a polytechnic qualification relevant to their industry.

The 51 participants were mainly project managers who usually work independently of each other managing their own teams in branches around New Zealand. The two day programme stems from the company’s investment in a three year rotation plan, whereby similar work groups are bought together every three years in order to provide additional training and personal development opportunities.

The design brief provided by the national training manager was to provide opportunities for the participants to work alongside one another and acknowledge the different perspectives and skills that each participant brings to the organisation, in essence to step outside of their usual role of ‘boss’. The importance of team work was to be reinforced, and the activities also needed to embrace the company’s values and ‘clean, green team’ theme. The overall programme also needed to incorporate an element of fun. The facilitator designed a programme with activities that would reflect the competitive nature of the industry, encourage team work and be enjoyable.

The team building activities took place in Palmerston North at an indoor equestrian centre. The project managers were together for two days as part of a training programme. Initially ice breaker activities were used to introduce participants and to assist in building rapport with one
another, in addition to being used as an opportunity to create buy-in for the following team building activities. The activities included a twist on the game of ‘tag’ whereby each member once tagged had to link arms with the ‘tagger’ until there were two large groups with linked arms trying to tag members of the opposite group. The second activity involved a twist on ‘paper, scissors, rock’ and ‘rats and rabbits’. The participants were split into two teams and rather than the traditional paper, rock or scissors, they were instead given ‘wizard, elves and ogres’ as options and these words were to be combined with appropriate actions. Each team retired to their home base and discussed which term they would use. They then faced off with the opposing team and on the count of three the teams simultaneously called out the word and the action. The winning word/action team then chased the losing team back to their respective home base, those that were tagged then joined the opposing team.

Once the participants had completed these ice breaker activities the participants were split into ten teams, asked to select a captain, choose a team name and then pick up a set of bandanas to be worn for the day to identify the team members. Once the teams had been formed, each team was asked to choose three values that reflected the company’s values and would be a key to the team’s overall success. The five teams were then asked to share and explain the reasoning behind their selection of the three words, which resulted in plenty of laughter and an eagerness to commence the day’s activities.

The activities were based on a ‘fun pentathlon’ incorporating problem-solving and interpersonal skill based activities involving working together on large sleds in a relay, an unusual twist on the traditional sack relays, relay races, rubber fish throwing (which inspired a lot of laughter), a four way tug-o-war. The final activity involved building large slingshots and then testing their efficiency by engaging in a competition to see which team could score a
bullseye on the target that had been set up some distance from the teams. Each of the activities was introduced by the facilitator who then elicited feedback upon completion regarding the relationships between the activity and their workplace. At the conclusion of the activities, the project managers adjoined to a nearby restaurant where photos of the day’s events were shown on a projector screen leading to good natured, but long and detailed descriptions of where teams had gone wrong, and what could have been done differently.

4.3 DiggerCo - Questionnaire results

To provide additional clarity, the actual number of respondents with the percentage is shown in brackets in the key to each graph. The questionnaires invited participants to briefly elaborate on five questions, which were subsequently analysed for recurring, emerging or interesting themes. The key themes were ranked according to the number of times they were mentioned by the participants, which are listed in order of the questionnaire number along with the actual question (where applicable).

Section 2 - Overall views:

Q 1. Overall I enjoyed participating in the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the design brief objectives for this organisation was to ensure that the activities included an element of fun. These figures show the team building activities were well received, with 60% of the participants agreeing they had enjoyed the activities and 38% noting they strongly agreed they enjoyed the activities.

Q 1. Qualitative comments

Please briefly explain your response to the above question.

1. Having fun (7)
2. Getting to know others in the business (6).
3. NIL comments (6)
4. Generally positive comments (5)
5. Competitive aspect - activities related to real world/workplace (1)
Total replies: 25

Q 2. Overall the team building activities were worthwhile to me personally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question two shows an almost even split between those who thought they had been worthwhile personally (40%) and those that neither agreed or disagreed (44%).
Q 3. I feel my workplace environment is more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>13 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is not a surprising outcome, as the majority of participants work independently of one another and it was not one of the stated objectives of the team building activities.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that 10 of the 25 participants either agreed or strongly agreed that their workplace was more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.

Q 4. I feel more motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>17 (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivation was not one of the overall aims or objectives of the design brief, so not an altogether unexpected response. The five participant responses who disagreed are further explored in the discussion chapter.
Q 5. I feel more de-motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This statement was included in order to see if participants actually felt more de-motivated as a result of the team building activities. There were several reasons for asking this. Firstly, some individuals may have felt that it was not at all worthwhile, and consequently perhaps a waste of theirs and the organisation’s time. Secondly, some participants may have felt de-motivated due to participation in the activities themselves, due to being put ‘on the spot’ in front of colleagues, or in a situation in which they did not feel entirely comfortable. However, in analysing the agree and strongly agree replies, it appears possible that the question was misinterpreted, as the following responses by those individuals to other questions regarding the team building were positive. Overall, it appears that the majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the question.
Q 6. The team building activities will help improve my job performance now and in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are also not entirely unexpected, as improving or enhancing the participants overall job performance was not a specific aim of the design brief.

Q 7. Overall, I feel that the team building activities had a positive impact on my workplace as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question elicited an entirely unexpected response. Question 3 asked whether they thought their workplace was more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities. The above question asked a similar question, and yet gained considerable support, with 76% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.
Q 8. Qualitative comments

Thinking about the team building activities, what in your opinion was particularly beneficial in terms of improving your overall workplace performance?

1. Getting to know colleagues (7)
2. Increasing/enhancing communication/interpersonal skills (5)
3. Breaking down barriers between various levels in the business (4)
4. NIL responses (4)
5. Competitive aspect (3)
6. Other comments (1)
7. No benefit (1)

Total replies: 25

Summary of questions 1-8:

Questions 1-8 were designed to gather overall perceptions of the team building activities and on the whole are positive, a conclusion that is also supported by the qualitative comments noted above. The one ‘other’ comment was “everyone has the same problems”.
Section 3 - Interpersonal relationships:

Q 9. I feel that I am better able to communicate with other members of my team as a result of the team building activities.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providing the opportunity for the participants to get together was one of the objectives and the positive responses to this question point to this objective being met.

Q 10. Compared with before the team building activities, my level of trust and confidence in my colleagues has increased.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>11 (44%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As many of the participants do not work together, these figures are perhaps to be expected. What is of interest however, is that 48% agreed that their level of trust and confidence had increased, with only 4% noting that they disagreed.
Q 11. I feel that I better understand my colleagues as a result of the team building activities.

Strongly Agree: 1 (4%)
Agree: 18 (72%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 5 (20%)
Disagree: 0 (0%)
Strongly Disagree: 1 (4%)

One of the design brief objectives was to provide an opportunity for the participants to get to know one another. These results indicate this objective was met, producing a 72% positive agree response, with only a small percentage neither agreeing or disagreeing (5%) and only 1% strongly disagreeing.

Section 3: Questions 9-11 summary:

This section was primarily concerned with interpersonal relationships that were part of the design brief, and overall the responses are positive, indicating that the activities contributed to increasing or enhancing interpersonal relationships amongst the participants.
Section 4: Organisation commitment

Q 12. As a result of the team building activities I feel more committed to the organisation and I am less likely to leave in the near future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an interesting result, although there is near even split between the agree and neither agree nor disagree, the fact that 44% agreed does tend to support much of the existing literature on organisational commitment and is further discussed in the following chapter.

Q 13. As a result of the team building activities I feel better about the organisation and am more likely to talk positively about it outside of my workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question supports question number 12 and shows a significant (68%) proportion of the respondents agreeing with the statement.
Q 14. As a result of the team building activities I now feel like a ‘part of the family’ in my organisation.

Strongly Agree: 1 (4%)
Agree: 17 (68%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 5 (20%)
Disagree: 1 (4%)
Strongly Agree: 1 (4%)

This was one of the key objectives of the team building activities, and a significant proportion (72%) of the participants agreed that they now feel like part of the family within the organisation.

Section 4 - Questions 12-13 summary:

This section was based on aspects contributing to organisational commitment and the results tend to support research in this field which is discussed in more depth in the following chapter.
Section 5 - Goal setting:

Q 15. I feel the team building activities motivated me to set goals that will assist me in my workplace performance.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goal setting was not included in the design brief for this organisation, thus the responses are not entirely unexpected. However, the fact that 32% agreed, as opposed to a combined total of 20% that either disagreed/strongly disagreed, is nevertheless an interesting finding.

Q 16. I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree</td>
<td>14 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question was included in order to provide additional backup support for question 15 and resulted in a similar response.
Q 17. Compared with before the team building activities, my workplace has become more productive.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>18 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increasing productivity in the workplace was not one of the aims of the organisations design brief and as a result these figures are not unexpected.

Section 5 - Questions 15-17 summary:

Section five was concerned with goal setting and motivation and, as noted, goal setting was not a part of the design brief. However there are some interesting findings in this section which are elaborated on in the discussion chapter.
Section 6 - Problem solving:

Q 18. I am better able to identify and evaluate problems in my job as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree:</th>
<th>0 (0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>13 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section was concerned with problem solving and, whilst not resulting in a marked increase, the following question showed a slightly different result which is interesting.

Q 19. I am better equipped to implement and resolve solutions to problems in my workplace as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree:</th>
<th>0 (0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>9 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>11 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question asked about implementation and resolution of problems, resulting in a higher level of ‘agree’ responses than the previous question. These two questions are further discussed in the following chapter.
Q 20. Overall, do you feel that the team building activities have been beneficial to your organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a particularly interesting finding as it relates directly to the research question. 80% felt that the team building activities were beneficial to their organisation and this result is further discussed in the following chapter.

Q 21. Qualitative themes from questionnaire

Please briefly explain your response to question 21.

1. Increased interpersonal relationships (16)
2. Nil response (5)
3. Identifying potential leaders (3)
4. Other (1)

Total replies: 25
Q 22. Qualitative comments

Please describe your initial reaction when you first heard that you would be participating in team building activities.

1. No interest/negative reaction (14)
2. Looking forward to the team building activities (11)

Total replies: 25

Q 23. Qualitative comments

Referring to question 22, has your attitude towards team building activities changed? Please briefly explain your response.

1. No (7)
2. Yes (16)
3. Nil response (1)
4. Neutral (1)

Total replies: 25

Summary of questions 18-23:

This section was concerned with problem solving skills and organisational benefits. In addition, participants were also asked to comment on their thoughts regarding participating in the team building activities before and after completion. All of the areas generated significant positive data, which is further explored in the discussion section.
DiggerCo - Personal interviews

The first question pertained to the participants’ overall thoughts on the team building activities. The first interviewee noted that teams that work together on a day-to-day basis would be more likely to benefit from team building activities such as the ones included in this study, but noted that “the presentation was really good, and I think that was really beneficial…it turned something relatively simple into fun, by that I mean it did not require many props”. The interviewee then went on to say that one of the main benefits of the team building activities was the opportunity to observe how others worked and interacted with each other, noting; “We work in a competitive industry and remaining competitive is really important as that’s how we win our contracts. People that are successful are those that are competitive, those that are not need more input into their daily performance to keep them motivated. I was very interested from a personal perspective to see what the various styles were and how they played out during the day”.

The second interviewee’s overall views of the team building activities pertained to the competitive element, stating; “it was quite strange that, as the activities went on, it got more and more competitive as the various personalities began to emerge and that was what made it very interesting to me personally”. The third participant to be interviewed made similar comments in response to the opening question, noting; I think that the competitive stuff is really good, what I mean is, it encouraged us to bond, gel as a team”.

In terms of benefiting personally from the team building activities, one commented; “It was worthwhile to me personally, if only to get the old brain working and thinking about different ways of achieving the tasks at hand”. The second participant said; “Yes, quite positive, I think
the biggest was challenging myself”. The third interviewee referred back to an earlier comment regarding observing how others work, saying; “I think that some of the activities were more beneficial than others, the sleds were interesting both as a participant and an observer, and it goes back to what I said earlier about observing how others work. When the pressure went on, some just froze…well in my group they did, and just when you think they are going to do one thing, they do the exact opposite. I was in the red team, and the guy in the lead wanted to do his own thing, we suffered from a severe lack of communication which cost us the game…which is not what we had initially agreed on prior to the start of the activity and that lead to some serious frustration, then the guy at the front finally started yelling ‘left, right, left’ which is what we had agreed on in the master plan, but by then it was too late and we ended up second to last”.

In response to the question pertaining to what, if any, benefits accrued to the organisation as a result of the team building activities, one of the interviewees pointed to the value of instilling a sense of family as being of benefit to the organisation, noting; “I think overall, it’s about building pride in the company…I do think therefore that there was value in the team building, in bringing us together…as the company grows ever larger and people come and go, it is important to keep us thinking like a team”. The second interviewee noted “There probably will be benefits but I think they may be quite subtle…I believe that from observing and working with others, you may spot something that could benefit us all. The third manager made a similar observation, saying; “The real benefit to the organisation from my perspective is seeing how others fit into broad categories…that information is quite useful as it allows one to identify certain personalities that you would be able to build on, assist in weaker areas possibly, and also who you may prefer to work with, you know…those that are on the same level”.

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The participants were also asked whether they thought communication between themselves and their colleagues had changed as a result of the team building activities. The first participant noted; “Due to my limited contact with my colleagues, it was great. It was good to open up lines of communication, especially with those that I had not met, and can now phone and chat, rather than emailing them”. The second participant echoed those of the first interviewee, adding; “I think that the activities made it a little easier to communicate, you know it was a bit more relaxed, it wasn’t all about work related matters, it was fun so therefore it was probably easier to start a conversation…It did allow the opening of communication channels easier because you were having fun rather than in a work situation”. The third participant’s comments also related to opening communication channels therefore making it easier to strike up a conversation.

The participants were also asked whether there was any change in interpersonal relationships as a result of the team building activities. The first participant pointed to the value of being able to put a name to a face, noting; One of the guys in the organisation who was in my team on the day, I have known him for years, but I am not good with names and faces, now we have participated in something together that encouraged the use of names…you know in cheering on your team mates, well through that interaction I also got to know someone else and I will definitely not forget either of them now, it’s now instant recall, even pick up the phone now and chat…actually its great”.

The second participant thought that the value was in observing different personalities that were involved, noting the team building activities provided “several eye opening moments”. The researcher then asked the interviewee to explain what was meant by eye opening moments, the interviewee said; “Well… as I said, the leader in our team, well look to be
honest if I was looking for a leader for a team project, given the poor way he led us…I would be seriously considering someone else, in fact I was really surprised looking around at how some of the guys I interact with on a daily basis were taking total control, and some of the seniors were standing back, whilst the younger new guys were giving orders, yep as I said eye-opening, but very valuable”. The interviewee then went on to say that such observations are beneficial to the organisation in terms of looking at the underlying reasons for the team building and how others react to situations. In this case it was a competitive race and, as they work in a competitive industry, reactions under pressure are important. The interviewee also noted that had the questions been put to him immediately following the activities; I probably would not have even thought of that, I mean stepping back and having time to reflect was also beneficial, having time to really look at the underlying stuff”.

In terms of increased or enhanced commitment to the organisation, the first participant responded; “The organisation is very family orientated and I would like to say that I think it’s great that the company does this across all levels and at some level we are all the part of the bigger group which I think is key”. The second participant noted; “Overall, it did provide an opportunity for valuable insights into how people work, communicate and get on with one another, a really important part of our business overall, so yes I do see benefits to the organisation”. The third participant had this to say; No, not really, I am committed to the organisation and am happy in my work, I think it’s great that they do include this sort of stuff in the development programmes across the board, as I think there are real benefits in getting to know your colleagues in a more relaxed but stimulating environment and as I said earlier, opening communication channels, working together on activities that required some thinking about the end result and so on was overall beneficial to our organisation”.

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The participants’ views on the overall facilitation of the team building activities resulted in all three interviewees agreeing that the facilitator was very good. Comments included; *I don’t think it would have been successful if it was boring, he put fun into it, he was charismatic, but at the same time assertive, and that’s what a group like ours needed*, “I think the idea of showing the pictures on the slide show that night was great, kept the buzz going. The facilitator himself was quite innovative I thought, a very enthusiastic organiser and that makes a real difference”.

The participants were asked at the conclusion of the interview if there was anything further they would like to add. One of the participants summed up the value of team building from a personal perspective saying; “*I think the concept of having a group of people together and having some organised activities creates an atmosphere that allows for people to be a bit more natural or open, they are not threatened by their lack of either knowledge or experience in their job situation, a level playing field is established. You are completely removed from pressures of work, so you are more relaxed, this allows different facets of personalities to emerge and that’s what I find more interesting than anything else, is what comes out of people, what you actually see*. The other two managers referred to the duration of the team building being a bit too brief, however both noted that timing is always an issue in terms of having so many senior managers away from their work for two days.

The final interview was undertaken with the training manager, and followed a slightly different format in terms of the questions asked. The first question pertained to the training manager’s overall observations regarding the team building activities. The training manager felt that overall the participants had all enjoyed themselves and the activities were well suited to the client group. The key to a successful day was the energy the facilitator brought to the
activities, ensuring that everyone remained fully engaged. The training manager was then asked to summarise the overall purpose of the team building activities. Re-iterating the design brief objectives, the manager said; “Get the guys out of the conference room and stimulate them. I wanted them put in a position of having to listen to and work with other people instead of being the ‘boss’, by that I mean getting a different perspective of each other. I also wanted our clean green team theme reinforced and our company values…and, as I said, the activities also needed to be fun”.

Organisational development according to the literature is concerned with improving organisational effectiveness and overall employee well-being. The researcher asked the training manager what his thoughts were about this relationship and using team building activities. The training manager felt that incorporating team building into the overall management programme certainly provided the opportunities for the participants to learn more about each other in a relaxed forum, which was one of the key objectives.

In terms of benefits to the organisation, the training manager had this to say; “The real benefits in my opinion are as I said, putting the guys in a situation where they had to work with and listen to one another. It’s about gaining fresh ideas and extending their knowledge base about the importance of teams, you know understanding the complex nature of teams - they are all different and they all bring different skills. The activities really got them thinking outside of the box, and how they work together. All of this contributes to learning about what makes a good team, which is very beneficial to our organisation”. Another benefit according to the training manager was that the activities were something they don’t normally do and because they were creative and well facilitated, the overall objectives were able to be met due to the fact that; “Because much of the usual team building stuff has been done to death, it’s
important that we find things that are new, fresh and creative, while still meeting the objectives of the overall programme. In addition, we need someone who understands what our requirements are and is able to design a programme that will meet those requirements”.

In terms of any ancillary benefits resulting from participation in the team building activities, the training manager commented; “The feedback from some of the lads was interesting, especially comments that pertained to how others worked under pressure, actually, how some didn’t perform so well, so its something we can look at. I guess it could be included as an ancillary benefit by virtue of the fact that it was planned for, and at the end of the day, it is good for us to be able to identify the good and the bad”.

The researcher asked the training manager whether or not they would use team building activities again as part of the organisation’s overall training and development plan, the answer was a definitive “Yes”. The training manager also commented on the value of using an external facilitator saying; “I work with these guys everyday and while I could probably do them myself, I wouldn’t. The facilitator was full of energy and ‘over the top’. If I had got up and done that, I would have just looked foolish. I would not have got the same buy-in as he did. As I said, I travel regularly and have interviewed several facilitators over the years. I chose this one because of the energy and creativity he brings to the activities, he gets the guys engaged quickly, and we will definitely continue to work with him”.

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Case summary

The overall views expressed by the participants in both the questionnaires and the personal interviews point to one overarching organisational benefit being accrued as a result of the team building activities, that of interpersonal relationships, especially increasing/enhancing of communication skills. In terms of the activities themselves, the majority of the participants agreed that they had enjoyed themselves, furthermore by incorporating an element of competitiveness the participants were better able to relate to the activities. While the majority of participants did not think their level of commitment to the organisation had altered, most felt more like a part of the family and they were also more likely to speak positively outside of their workplace which is an encouraging result for organisation A. The overall findings for DiggerCo are discussed in more depth in the findings and analysis chapter.

4.5 FizzCo - Background

Case study B is a high profile international organisation with approximately 1000 employees involved in manufacturing and marketing an instantly recognisable branded product. The programme was run over two days with the main aim of launching the 2008 twelve month in-house high performance leadership programme. There were 21 participants at various levels of management and few had met in person. The participants are viewed by their organisation as future leaders within the business. Of the 17 who returned questionnaires, 65% are in management roles currently, 6% are senior managers, and 29% occupied non-management positions. 53% of the participants were male and 47% female. The length of tenure varied, the majority had been employed by the company for between one and three years, 23% had been with the company between five and seven years, 12% had been with the company between
three and five years, with the same figure employed for less than one year. The remaining 6% had been with the company for more than seven years.

The design brief for the team building facilitator was to incorporate activities that would reinforce the Johari’s Window model developed by Luft and Ingram (Robbins et al., 2008), upon which the two day programme was largely based. In addition, the organisation’s core values of innovation, passion, excellence, people, customer and citizenship, neatly summarised under the umbrella of ‘refreshingly kiwi’ were to be reflected in the activities. The facilitator decided on a decidedly ‘kiwiana’ theme.

The team building activities took place at a hotel resort located an hour south of Auckland. Once all the participants had arrived, the morning commenced with four ice breaker activities. Each of the ice breaker activities was deliberately chosen to begin the process of introducing the Johari’s Window concepts to the participants. Activities were used as a metaphor for the four areas in the model, encouraging personal disclosure and involved activities that included such things as birthplace, position in organisation, favourite pastime and cartoon character and destination of dream holiday. At the end of the three activities each participant was able to clearly and without prompting recall numerous details about their colleagues. This ice breaker period was completed by participation in the Yurt circle, which involves all participants holding a rope in a taut circle enabling willing individuals to climb up on top of the rope and walk around the circle. This activity provided a strong metaphor for the value of everyone working together and instantly sparked a discussion about ‘team work’.

The catapult activity was the first activity to solicit feedback in a structured manner. The participants were required to build a catapult with each team given photos taken at odd angles
of various parts of a completed catapult. The photo angles made it quite difficult to work out what parts they were viewing. In addition each team was given five photos placed face down that they could choose to turn over for a period of 30 seconds at a time or turn simultaneously but within the same time limit. Prior to commencing this activity each participant had been asked to pick a colleague’s name out of a hat and this was to become their ‘secret buddy’. The facilitator stressed that this activity was not so much about the task, but rather the outcome was more important as this would lead to valuable personal observations and feedback being acquired. At the end of the activity each of the participants found their secret buddy and spent some time discussing the observations they had made and giving and receiving feedback. This was followed by taking some time alone to reflect and fill in the personal diaries they were required to keep for the duration of the programme.

Most of the activities were undertaken outdoors (due to fine weather). The final activity for the day involved a ‘great kiwi bar-b-que cook off”. This activity involved teams of four working together to first design and then present their menu to the head chef (facilitator) and the other teams. Each menu must have included every ingredient that had been previously placed on their table. The teams then had fifty minutes to cook and present their three-course meals. While the participants sat down to their meals, they were treated to a summary of the day’s events via a slide show. Day two began with four teams building trolleys for the inaugural ‘pimp my trolley’ derby. Following the conclusion of the race, the winners were crowned, and all participants departed the venue.
4.6  FizzCo - Questionnaire results

Section 2 - Overall views:

Q 1. Overall I enjoyed participating in the team building activities.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>12 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>4 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organisation’s design brief for the team building activities was quite specific, and one of the final objectives was to include an element of fun. 17 out of a total of 21 participants in the team building activities responded to the questionnaire, and 16 of the 17 clearly enjoyed the activities.

Q 1. Qualitative comments

Please briefly explain your responses to question 1.

1. Meeting other colleagues (7)
2. Programme was well facilitated and enjoyable (8)
3. Nil response (2)

Total replies: 17
Q 2. Overall the team building activities were worthwhile to me personally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an interesting result, with 83% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that the activities were personally worthwhile. This is explored further in the discussion section where the data from the personal interviews provides additional support for these figures.

Q 3. I feel my workplace environment is more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As many of the participants do not work together, this is not an unexpected outcome. However it is interesting to note that, whilst 53% neither agreed or disagreed, 47% did feel that their work environment had become more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.
Q 4. I feel more motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16 (94%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The design brief included providing opportunities for developing interpersonal relationships, the fact so many agreed to feeling more motivated at work is an interesting finding and is expanded upon in the discussion section.

Q 5. I feel more de-motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4 (23%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>11 (65%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This statement elicited similar responses to DiggerCo and it may be that the one participant that responded with an ‘agree’ perhaps misunderstood this particular question based on their responses to other similar questions.
Q 6. The team building activities will help improve my job performance now and in the future.

Strongly Agree: 0 (0%)
Agree: 12 (71%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 4 (23%)
Disagree: 1 (6%)
Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

This is an interesting finding, with 71% agreeing that the activities will help their job performance now and in the future, and only 23% responding by neither agreeing or disagreeing.

Q 7. Overall, I feel that the team building activities had a positive impact on my workplace as a whole.

Strongly Agree: 0 (0%)
Agree: 13 (76%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 4 (24%)
Disagree: 0 (0%)
Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

Despite the fact that many of the participants do not work together in the same physical location, the overall response to this statement produced an interesting result that is further discussed in the following chapter.
Q 8. Qualitative comments

Thinking about the team building activities, what in your opinion was particularly beneficial in terms of improving overall workplace performance?

1. Developing relationships - other parts of the business/networking/contacts (9)
2. Developing self-awareness - strengths/weaknesses (7)
3. NIL responses (1)

Total replies: 17

Section 2 - Questions 1-8 Summary:

This section was concerned with participant’s overall perceptions of the team building activities, which overall were extremely positive and are further discussed in the following chapter.
Section 3 - Interpersonal relationships:

Q 9. I feel that I am better able to communicate with other members of my team as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12 (71%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>5 (29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part of the design brief was to support the leadership programme aims. In order to facilitate this, one of the key objectives was to include activities that would increase/enhance communication.

Q 10. Compared with before the team building activities, my level of trust and confidence in my colleagues has increased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4 (23%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10 (59%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>3 (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82% either strongly agreed or agreed that their level of trust and confidence had increased due to participation in the team building activities. These figures also support the design brief objectives, and are further discussed in the following chapter.
Q 11. I feel that I better understand my colleagues as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2 (12%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12 (70%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>3 (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with the two previous statements, the majority (82%) of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt better able to understand their colleagues, and these figures provide significant support for this statement.

Section 3 - Questions 9-11 Summary:

This section was based around interpersonal relationships which were one of the objectives of the design brief. Overall the results appear to be positive, thus suggesting that this objective was met, and is further discussed in the following chapter.
Section 4 - Organisation commitment:

Q 12. As a result of the team building activities I feel more committed to the organisation and I am less likely to leave in the near future.

| Strongly Agree: | 2 (12%) |
| Agree: | 6 (35%) |
| Neither Agree or Disagree: | 8 (47%) |
| Disagree: | 1 (6%) |
| Strongly Disagree: | 0 (0%) |

This section was concerned with organisational commitment. The figures show 47% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with an equal figure neither agreeing or disagreeing. The 47% strongly agreeing or agreeing is nevertheless an interesting finding.

Q 13. As a result of the team building activities I feel better about the organisation and am more likely to talk positively about it outside of my workplace.

| Strongly Agree: | 3 (18%) |
| Agree: | 9 (53%) |
| Neither Agree or Disagree: | 5 (29%) |
| Disagree: | 0 (0%) |
| Strongly Disagree: | 0 (0%) |

This question was included in support of Question 12. 71% either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt better about the organisation and were more likely to speak positively about the organisation outside of their workplace.
Q 14. As a result of the team building activities I now feel like a ‘part of the family’ in my organisation.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>12 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This statement elicited an overwhelmingly positive response (100%) and is further discussed in the following chapter.

Section 4 - Questions 12-13 summary

Whilst only three statements concerning organizational commitment were included in this section, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. The final question in this section provides a very interesting finding, with 100% agreeing that as a result of the team building activities they felt part of the family. This is further discussed, with support from the personal interviews, in the following chapter.
Section 5 - Goal setting:

Q 15. I feel the team building activities motivated me to set goals that will assist me in my workplace performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Count (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>6 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section was concerned with goal setting, which was not an overall aim of the team building activities. It is interesting to see that 65% either strongly agreed or agreed that, as a result of the team building activities, they felt more motivated to set goals in order to assist them in their workplace performance.

Q 16. I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Count (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>7 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an interesting result, as 53% strongly agree or agree that they feel better able to achieve workplace goals, as opposed to 41% who neither agreed or disagreed.
Q 17. Compared with before the team building activities, my workplace has become more productive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst some of the participants work in the same physical locale, they do not work together, thus these responses are not unexpected. However, it is interesting to note that 29% agreed that their workplace had become more productive. The 29% that agreed could be due to those particular participants putting into action what they had learned from the programme with their own staff.

Section 5 - Questions 15-17 summary:

This section was primarily concerned with goal setting. Overall the results were positive and are further discussed in the following chapter.
Section 6 - Problem solving:

Q 18. I am better able to identify and evaluate problems in my job as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The problem solving activities encouraged participants to think about the way they identify and evaluate problems in their workplace. 53% strongly agreed or agreed that they did feel better able to identify and evaluate problems as a result of the team building activities.

Q 19. I am better equipped to implement and resolve solutions to problems in my workplace as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results indicate that the majority (65%) of the participants agreed that they felt better equipped to implement and resolve problems in the workplace as a result of the team building activities.
Q 20. Overall, do you feel that the team building activities have been beneficial to your organisation?

Strongly Agree: 0 (0%)
Agree: 13 (76%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 4 (24%)
Disagree: 0 (0%)
Strongly Disagreed: 0 (0%)

As noted in DiggerCo results, this question relates directly to the research question and indicates that overall the participants thought the team building activities were beneficial to the organisation.

Q 21. Qualitative comments

Please briefly explain your response to question 20.

1. Develop interpersonal relationship skills (9)
2. NIL responses (4)
3. Motivation (2)
4. Developing self-awareness (1)
5. Not important (1)
Total replies: 17
Q 22. Qualitative comments

Please describe your initial reaction when you first heard that you would be participating in team building activities.

1. Positive (10)
2. Nervous/apprehensive (3)
3. Negative (2)
4. Neutral (2)
Total replies: 17

Q 23. Qualitative comments

Referring to question 22 has your attitude towards team building activities changed? Please briefly explain your response.

1. Yes - much more open/personal gains/enjoyed competitiveness (12)
2. Neutral - positive about team building so no change (4)
3. Pointless (1)
Total replies: 17

Section 6 - Questions 18-20 summary:

This section was concerned with problem solving skills and organisational benefits. In addition, participants were also asked to comment on their thoughts regarding participating in
the team building activities before and after completion. All of the areas generated significant positive data which is further explored in the discussion section.

4.7 FizzCo - Personal interviews

Two participants were interviewed from FizzCo along with the organisational development manager, whose interview comments will follow this section.

The interview opened by asking the interviewee(s) to recount their overall thoughts on the team building activities. The first interviewee noted; “Yep I really liked them, it’s hard sometimes to actually define whether or not you learned something from them…it’s quite interesting that the company puts value in things like that, but I really like them. I often think about team building like ‘God, team building’, but then when I do them, I love every second”. The second interviewee said; “It was a lot of fun, I really enjoyed myself”.

In terms of being worthwhile personally, one of the interviewees began by saying; “Yes I got to know a lot of other people in the business, made a lot of contacts, but I don’t think I learned a hell of a lot about myself because they were quite tame activities”. The benefits were probably more around where I fitted in a team environment, how I communicated with others and how clear if at all my communication was”. Contradicting the “tame activities” label, the interviewee added; “…in those environments you do things that are outside of your comfort zone, and for me that was great, like the fact that I was the first one down the hill in the go-kart and that’s not normally me, peer pressure in those groups mean you don’t want to let anyone down so you go ahead and do those things”. Continuing with this train of thought, the interviewee finished by adding; “They were great, everyone could participate no matter
what their level and that’s why I think I have a negative view of team building, you know people being pushed outside of their comfort zone. Often you get asked to do things that you really hate. You know someone joked about running up that hill next door to us. I would not have found that fun, I would have done it, but my reaction to this survey would have been very different”.

Regarding their opinions on what, if any, benefits accrued to the organisation as a result of the team building activities, one participant said; “…increased knowledge of other people in the business, knowing where to contact them…I go to quite a few meetings where other high performers (refers to the group involved in the two day programme) and they now have more credence in my mind because they were part of that group. So, yes I think there was definitely a benefit to the organisation because I have now got a key group of stakeholders that I can go to with any concerns”.

In terms of increased/enhanced interpersonal relationships, one of the participants thought that the team building activities really assisted in raising awareness of how they communicated, this was a key point as it formed one of the design brief objectives. The interviewee said; “The way that I spoke to others, the words I used, all the activities that we did put you in a position where you had to communicate effectively, we had a choice…so that when you get back to your everyday job you are a bit more conscious about what you are saying and how you say it”. The second interviewee noted; “The type of communication has changed, it’s not as formal as it was. I can pick up the phone now rather than sending an email. Casual quick conversations now because they know who you are which is a good thing”. Other than increased communication skills, the interviewee went on to note that by participating in the activities, their trust and confidence had also increased, stating; “I have called colleagues to get some
feedback on something that I have sent through, so it’s been communication around my brands. I have called to see if my communication was clear, asking them ‘do you think that everyone will understand it, is there anything I could have done better’. So as a result of the team building I am definitely trying to make a conscious decision to do things better”.

The researcher was keen to know if these changes were a direct result of the team building activities or a combination of the leadership programme and the activities, the interviewee responded; “They were definitely attributable to the team building activities”. The interviewee went on to add; “I would not have called my colleagues to get feedback in the past, so yes it has changed. My relationship with the people in the XL group has changed. I have stayed in contact with a lot of people that I did not know before in different parts of the business, but it has also allowed me to better understand everyone else in the business as well, and I also have a better perspective on the different areas in the business and what other people’s roles are and how I can help them and they can help me”.

In terms of whether they had heard any comments from other participants, one interviewee stated; “When we got back to work, some people found they were really helpful and they commented they had got quite a bit out of them. Others found that they were just sort of participating for the sake of participating, just doing some fun activities, you know to sort of break up the day. There were definitely mixed feelings about the team building. I think it came down to the individuals and how open they were to learning from each experience I guess”. However, a later conversation at a meeting with fellow high performance team members resulted in this comment; “Well, we were all talking about the go-carts and what we were going to do with them, and again it got quite competitive, you know, whose cart was the best, and of course it was ours! I guess the fact that we were discussing it keeps the memories alive, so that is a good thing”. The second interviewee could not recall any comments regarding the
team building upon returning to the workplace, but pointed out the reason for this may be due to the fact that they work in a satellite branch, and therefore have little contact with other colleagues.

In terms of organisational commitment, the first participant made the observation that the mere act of being invested in was definitely a real plus, noting in an exuberant manner; “...yes, as I said it’s lovely to be invested in, it really is...it is a brilliant company and it keeps getting better. These kind of things (refers to team building activities) it shows that our company is developing with the times, and in this market where finding the right employees is tough, it is good to see that they are putting their money in the right places...I love this company”. The second participant echoed these comments, saying; “I was already committed to the business, but I think the way I am committing has changed as a result of the team building activities. I am more willing to put my hand up for things, more willing to get involved in different parts of the business, more willing to learn about other parts of the business. I am asking a lot more questions about the business and expecting more in return. The way I use my time here has changed, so that’s where that change in commitment has come from”.

The researcher did not ask either of the interviewees about the underlying aim of some of the activities, however both made similar comments when asked about what they thought of the actual activities. The first interviewee noted; “At the beginning of every activity it was quite clear what the objective of that activity was and why we were doing it. There was some indication of what was expected that we would get out of the activity, but we weren’t told, ‘ok, heres what you do and this is how you should feel afterwards...’”
“I could relate every activity that we did back to the workplace, to some sort of work function. I could see it without it being explained to me - why we were doing the activities and what we were supposed to get out of it, you could definitely see how they related back to work”.

When asked if there was anything that they wished to add, one noted that in terms of overall benefits to the organisation, it was their opinion that providing opportunities to hone communication skills, meeting and getting to know other members of the high performance team along with being able to identify colleagues that they could go to should they need advice or guidance, was not only personally worthwhile, but did in fact benefit the organisation as well.

The final interview was undertaken with the organisational development manager, and followed a slightly different format to the participants’ personal interview format. The interview began by asking the manager what the overall purpose of the team building activities was, to which the reply was; “To quickly establish relationships with the people who don’t normally work together, being the high performance group. To provide opportunities for people to work closely together on tasks and experience what that was like …and to see what those experiences were like in terms of frustration or ease in working with others. To use the activities as a way to observe others, receive feedback about yourself…”.

The next question related to the manager’s opinions regarding the benefits of using team building activities such as those that the high performance team engaged in. The manager noted; “They help with the engagement of people who are seen as critical talent in the business who you definitely want to develop and retain, so taking them out of the workplace and giving them time to do the activities together really helps to build the idea they are valued employees and valued for what they bring to the organisation…in terms of the particular type
of activities being used as metaphors for things like problem solving, it meant that the high
performers could really work on working with other colleagues to identify, and then work out
the best way to resolve the problem. This was particularly evident in the activity based around
the catapults”.

The researcher then asked whether any organisational benefits accrued to the organisation as a
result of the high performance team members participating in the team building activities.
The manager responded by saying; “From my perspective, it’s about growing people, I believe
that growing people’s self-awareness enables them to better develop themselves, and then
perhaps be even better at helping others do the same. I think people learn best through
experience as opposed to being told what to do, and that is a real benefit to this organisation.
The whole idea of getting to know their colleagues, working on communication skills which
involves giving and receiving feedback, working as a team member, these are all benefits, and
I think for those reasons the use of team building activities such as the ones we used are very
beneficial, especially when they support …or rather reinforce the overall objectives of the
leadership programme…which I might add they did so!”

The organisational development manager then asked the researcher to play back what they
had said, and then added; “The other thing about benefits to the organisation is simply the
idea of taking time out from work to have fun together…it just takes some of the seriousness
and stress out of our usually high pressured, stressful jobs…another benefit to the
organisation was that we incorporated our values and overall theme into the activities…
I guess we focused on our people value, our innovation value and our excellence and passion,
the activities were also about giving something away which was part of the Johari’s window
concept, and that also aligned with our citizenship values, so in a way we really were
reinforcing what the company believes are the ‘appropriate’ ways of behaving in this business”.

The organisational development manager also noted there never seems to be adequate time, referring to taking key managers out of the business for two days. As a result the interviewee felt that perhaps not enough time had been allocated in some activities to really reinforce the analogies to the workplace through more in-depth de-briefings. However, the manager did think that, overall, the participants had gained significantly from the experience. In summary, the manager observed; “The real value is that once people are engaged in those type of activities, they are relaxed having fun and the learning is almost accidental at times…well not accidental, what’s the word…it doesn’t feel forced”.

Case summary

The questionnaire results and personal interviews indicate several key themes emerging. The majority of participants agreed they had enjoyed the team building activities. The participants also agreed that the team building activities had assisted with getting to know their colleagues, enhanced trust and understanding, and communication skills. Interestingly, more than half of the participants also felt more motivated to set goals that would assist them in their workplace performance. In addition, 100% of the respondents felt more like part of the family, with just over 70% agreeing they were more likely to talk about the organisation in a positive manner outside of the workplace. In summary, the main themes to emerge were; overall enjoyment of the activities, development of interpersonal skills, specifically, increased/enhanced communication, understanding, trust and confidence in colleagues, and goal setting.

The key findings are discussed in more depth in Chapter 5.
5. **Findings and Analysis**

5.1 **Objective and outline**

The overall aim of this case study research was to discover what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities; as perceived by the participants and the training managers from both organisations. This chapter considers the results of the questionnaires and personal interviews along with the design briefs and observations from DiggerCo and FizzCo in light of the literature, and analyses the findings in order to provide answers to the research question. A cross-case analysis is shown in chart form and is accompanied by a discussion of the similarities and differences between the two organisations.

5.2 **DiggerCo - Findings**

Providing opportunities for the participants to step outside of their usual role of ‘boss’, to work alongside their colleagues acknowledging the various skills that each brings to the organisation, and to reinforce the importance of team work, were pivotal to the design brief. In addition, the company’s values and the newly introduced ‘clean green team’ theme were to be incorporated into the overall programme. In order to meet the design brief objectives, the facilitator designed a programme that reflected the competitive industry the managers work in. The activities provided the participants with opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships, encouraged team work and reflected the company’s values. The key interrelationships resulting from the observation and data collected via the questionnaires and personal interviews are now discussed as they relate to the design brief objectives.
Overall views

The questionnaire opened by asking participants to rate their overall enjoyment of the team building activities. An overwhelming majority (96%) either strongly agreed or agreed they had enjoyed participating in the activities. This was evidenced by plenty of laughter and good natured sledging during the activities, and it was clear during the observation that the participants were really enjoying themselves. The participants were asked to briefly explain why they enjoyed the activities and the qualitative responses revealed two key themes, the first being a well facilitated and enjoyable programme. ‘Having fun’ emerged as a common phrase when the participants were asked to briefly describe what made the team building activities enjoyable. Some of the comments included:

“It was good fun and got everyone talking”, “They were fun, bit of a laugh and a respite from sitting inside talking”, and “They were a great deal of fun”.

This theme was also strongly supported by the four personal interviews with comments including:

“The degree of competitiveness made it more enjoyable”, “They were a bit of fun…working together, getting to know each other on a more personal basis”, “It was having fun and trying to beat each other up...which brings different personalities out”.

The training manager from DiggerCo corroborated the participants’ comments noting: “The activities were creative, fun and enjoyable…the feedback I received pointed to the activities also being well received by the boys”.

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Having fun was also linked to the facilitation which contributed to the overall enjoyment of the activities. Some of the comments included:

“I think the facilitator was very good, he is obviously used to getting people working together”. “I don’t think it would have been successful if it was boring and that’s what a group like ours needed, its making things happen and that’s the key to successful facilitation”. “The facilitator was a very enthusiastic organiser, and that makes a big difference, a lively personality and some of that definitely rubs off”.

The facilitator deliberately designed a programme in conjunction with the training manager that would reflect the competitive nature of the industry within which the participants work. The personal interviews combined with several of the qualitative comments point to this being well received. This finding is in contrast to a study undertaken by Ibbetson and Newell (1999) which compared the outcomes of a competitive and non-competitive outdoor management development programme undertaken by MBA students. Ibbetson and Newell (1999) questioned each team two hours after completion of the activities and found that success tended to be defined in terms of how well the individual’s team had done in the competition. Those individuals that had done well in the competition felt the experience had been personally beneficial. Conversely, those individuals that were in teams that did not do so well tended to think the activities had not been personally beneficial. Ibbetson and Newell (1999) concluded that the “destructive impact of competition” (p. 61) negatively impacted on the participants experience of the programme.
The design brief called for activities that would allow the participants to get to know one another better by providing opportunities for the participants to work together. The observation, questionnaires and personal interviews all provided strong support for this objective being met, as the second key theme to emerge was: ‘getting to know colleagues better’. During the ice breaker activities, the participants had the opportunity to get to know one another in a more relaxed environment and by the time the indoor activities commenced many were more familiar with colleagues’ names and positions within the company.

As part of the overall views section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked if they felt the activities had had a positive impact on their workplace. The results showed 74% either strongly agreeing/agreeing. The following question asked participants why they thought this was so. Again the key theme to emerge was ‘getting to know colleagues’, the following qualitative comments represent the majority of the responses;

“It was the first time I had met with many on the course so an excellent way to get to know them better”, “it was good meeting others in the team”, and “…a good way to get to know people”.

The opportunity to meet other colleagues in a relaxed setting was a comment often heard during the observation and this was further supported by the personal interviews. One of the interviewees has worked for DiggerCo for over 16 years and despite having met some of the participants prior to the team building activities, noted the team building activities were beneficial, saying; “it helped in getting to know each on a more personal level”. When asked whether the team building activities were personally worthwhile, the participant commented; “…yeah I do and the biggest benefit was working alongside people you don’t know”. Another
interviewee has been with the company for over seven years and their overall comments echoed the previous interviewee; “overall it provided an opportunity to gain valuable insights into how people work, communicate and get on with others”.

The training manager from DiggerCo felt the design brief objective of developing/enhancing interpersonal relationships had been successfully achieved, going on to note that, by incorporating an element of fun within a slightly competitive environment, all the participants were kept fully engaged. Judging by the feedback received, the training manager believed the use of such activities had worked well. The questionnaire results support this observation, with 76% of the participants either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they felt better able to communicate with their colleagues as a result of the team building activities. Toofany (2007) suggests that the overriding purpose of team building is the improvement of communication. This positive response certainly implies that there is some value in utilising team building activities to improve communication skills. Further support for this is provided by the qualitative comments in the questionnaire which included;

“Enhancing interpersonal and communication skills amongst us”, “it opened lines of communication that were not previously open and it allowed some of the more retiring types to step up and take charge” and “…made communication easier when I got back to the workplace, good to know who I am talking to, so in that respect it was very beneficial for me personally”.

The interpersonal section also asked the participants whether they felt better able to understand their colleagues as a result of the team building activities, which resulted in 76% agreeing they did, which is a significant finding as this was, as previously noted, a key
objective of the design brief. The next question regarding interpersonal relationships asked the participants whether they felt their level of trust and confidence in their colleagues had increased as compared with before the team building activities. This question resulted in 52% agreeing that it had increased. While not overwhelming, it is still a positive finding as it indicates that just over half of the questionnaire respondents did find getting to know their colleagues better to be beneficial. Overall, the results tend to support research indicating the importance of developing interpersonal skills. As the majority of participants occupy management roles, the following quote by Robbins et al. (2008) is especially pertinent. “One common thread runs through the functions, roles, skills, activities approaches to management…it is clear that managers need to develop their people skills if they are going to be effective and successful” (p. 9).

**Problem solving**

During the final activity the researcher was able to observe the teams working out how to construct and use the slingshots. The questions pertaining to problem solving, however, resulted in an inconclusive response. The first question in the problem solving section asked whether or not the participants felt better able to identify and evaluate problems in their job as a result of the team building activities, which resulted in 47% adopting a neutral stance, and 53% either strongly agreeing or agreeing. However, the following question elicited a more positive response with 65% agreeing that they felt better able to implement and resolve problems as a result of the team building activities. The slingshot activity, while entertaining, did not provoke any discussion regarding identifying, evaluating, implementing or resolving problems in the workplace. Rather, the teams approached the activity as yet another competitive aspect of the day’s activities, and once again the overall goal of the teams
appeared to be building the most structurally sound slingshot which, the teams hoped, would be capable of firing and hitting the target. Because this particular activity was held late in the day, and timing was an issue, the facilitator (and the training manager) decided to extend the activity by an extra 30 minutes as the activity proved rather popular. This meant that the facilitator was unable to solicit any constructive feedback about how the teams worked through the problems that each team faced in the construction and accurate firing of the catapults.

Thus the use of this particular activity as a metaphor for problem solving was not reinforced. However, some of the informal feedback at the conclusion of the activity, along with the personal interviews, indicated that as with the previous ‘pentathlon’ activities, the competitive element again reflected the industry that the participants work in and, in that respect, the activities could be related back to their workplace.

The questionnaire also asked participants whether they felt the activities were personally worthwhile and this produced an interesting response given the positive replies to the questions above. While 52% strongly agreed or agreed that the activities were personally worthwhile, 48% neither agreed nor disagreed. This finding appears to contradict the otherwise positive responses regarding workplace benefits, such as increased/enhanced communication, trust and confidence, and feeling better able to understand their colleagues. Reasons for this apparent contradiction are discussed in the cross-case differences analysis. An anomaly was revealed in the replies to whether the team building activities would help improve the participant’s job performance now and in the future. 68% from DiggerCo neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. One reason for this, as noted earlier in this thesis, is the possibility that the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ option was used as a proxy for not-
applicable, meaning the participants did not see any connection between the team building activities and how that may contribute to improving their job performance. While the literature points to several factors that contribute to improved job performance, such as increased/enhanced interpersonal skills, the overall figures lend support to Robbins et al (2001) observation that a weak but positive relationship exists between participation in team building activities and improved job performance.

**Organisation commitment**

While organisational commitment was not able to be physically observed, it was included in this study as a potential ancillary benefit. The researcher did however have the opportunity to speak with several of the participants at the end of the ice breaker activities and then again at the conclusion of the team building activities. There did appear to be an overall sense of respect for the organisation and a real feeling of ‘being part of the family’ with various participants referring to the company as being; “family oriented”, “a real team spirit”, “family values”. Of the three questions pertaining to organisational commitment, only one resulted in an even split between strongly agreeing/agreeing and neither agreeing nor disagreeing (48%) with the other two resulting in a significantly positive response. Despite the even split between feeling more committed to the organisation as a result of the team building activities, 71% were more likely to talk positively about the company outside of the workplace and a definitive 100% of the participants felt more like ‘a part of the family’ (71% strongly agreed, 29% agreed). These findings are supported by extant literature regarding organisational commitment that shows well facilitated team building activities can be instrumental in gaining and/or enhancing employees’ level of organisational commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Bartlett, 2001; Tansky & Cohen, 2001). In addition, the value of having employees talk
positively about the organisation outside of the workplace is noted by Boshoff and Mels (2000) who state that employee attitudes and behaviours are important to an organisation, as they can “erode or enhance a company’s reputation” (p. 256).

**Goal setting**

While it was clear during the observation that each of the teams had set a short term goal of winning the overall competition, it was not possible to observe goal setting by individuals. Therefore, goal setting can only be discussed in terms of the questionnaire and personal interview results. Three questions pertaining to goal setting were asked in the questionnaire. The first question related to whether the participants felt more motivated to set goals that would assist them in their workplace performance. Of the twenty-five respondents, 48% neither agreed nor disagreed, 32% agreed, and 20% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The second question ‘I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities’, resulted in 56% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 28% agreeing, and 16% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The following question, ‘compared with before the team building activities my workplace has become more productive’, resulted in 72% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 8% disagreeing and 12% strongly disagreeing, with a meagre 8% agreeing.

A possible explanation for these results may lie in the fact that goal setting was not an overarching objective and, other than the short term goal of winning, was not discussed as part of the feedback that followed most of the activities. Nevertheless, eight of the participants did feel they were more motivated to set goals that would assist their workplace performance and for those eight the team building activities resulted in a positive outcome.
The final question in this section asked the participants whether they felt that, overall, the activities had been beneficial to their organisation. This resulted in 76% agreeing, with less than a quarter remaining neutral (24%). While some of the questionnaire results may not appear to have supported this overall positive response, the qualitative comments provide insight into what the participants saw as organisational benefits, and their comments were also echoed by the interviewees. The qualitative comments were grouped into themes and the key theme to emerge in terms of organisational benefits was the opportunity to develop interpersonal relationship skills. Comments from the questionnaire included:

“It developed a strong team bond”, “It has helped us understand and bond with our fellow employees in and out of the workplace environment”, “Yep, it got everyone talking from the different groups”.

**Participants’ perceptions of team building**

The final section of the questionnaire was concerned with the participants’ opinions on team building prior to the team building activities and whether their opinions had altered following participation. The researcher was interested in the participants’ perceptions of the term ‘team building’ because as noted in the introduction one of the disadvantages of team building is often the negative way it is perceived. The initial reactions were almost evenly split between ‘no interest’ (56%) and ‘acceptance’ (44%). Indicative of the negative opinions were comments such as;

“I thought how would silly games be good for team building” (participant number 3), “oh no why, where’s the bar?”(participant number 6), “disgust” (participant number 4), “I thought I
would rather have two days at home” (participant number 16), “I wonder what activities have been dreamt up this time” (participant number 12), and “Oh dear, not again” (participant number 19).

Had these participants read the New Zealand Sunday magazine referred to in the introduction, it appears many would have been in full agreement with the sentiments expressed regarding team building ‘away days’ as being something that one just had to accept and get on with in life. Of the twenty-five qualitative comments pertaining to post-event responses to the activities, seven said their opinion had not really changed, although some did mention that they had nevertheless enjoyed themselves. As this thesis is concerned with organisational benefits stemming from the use of team building activities, the sixteen participants who reversed their original opinion is of particular interest and tends to support the importance of a well-facilitated and enjoyable team building programme in engaging participants, thus perhaps encouraging the participants to be more open to the idea of team building, and as a result more open therefore to the acquisition of new skills.

Quoting the same participants as before, number 3 stated; “yes it certainly helped with creating a team”. Number 6 had experienced a significant change of opinion, going from “disgust” to; “found it beneficial to loosen everybody up. Also it allowed other people’s strengths to come forward. Sometimes the younger guys in a work situation are scared to speak up against the tried and true who are not always right”. Number 4 had also changed his opinion offering; “Yes - slightly more open to it”. Number 12 had also altered his original opinion noting; “To a degree as the activities were a lot of fun”. Number 19 said; “Yes, if all team building activities were facilitated as well and were as well organised they would be
Finally, number 10 noted; “Yes it has, have never done a lot of it so I am a lot more open about doing this sort of thing now”.

Additional findings

While the observation was undertaken in order to provide context and assist in understanding any references made to the activities in the questionnaire or subsequent interviews, the observation also provided other insights. As the team building activities began, the researcher was able to observe the teams moving through the first four stages of Tuckman’s five stage life-cycle model. The five stages are known as “forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning” (Robbins et al., 2001, p. 273).

Early in the observation phase it appeared that the ice breaker activities enabled the teams to move quickly through the norming stage which, according to Tuckman’s model, is characterised by uncertainty. This stage was evidenced by the members of some teams initially standing back with arms crossed and looking slightly concerned about what was going to happen next. However, once the ice breaker activities were underway, most appeared quite relaxed and as the participants moved indoors to start the pentathlon there was quite a bit of talking and laughter amongst the participants.

Once indoors the participants were put into teams. Storming forms the second stage of the cycle according to the model. The researcher observed (and heard) team members jostling for leadership roles, many of the members talking over each other and considerable disagreement amongst team members on how best to approach the activities. This led to some frustration resulting in some very colourful language emanating from some of the groups. Once the
leadership roles had been established, and members felt they were being heard and acknowledged, the teams appeared to move into the norming stage. This stage was characterised by all team members co-operating with one another as they really began to work towards the end goal. The norming stage was summarised by one of the participants during the observation who noted his team “were finally all on the same page”. This stage was possibly accelerated by the competition actually starting, and the competitive nature of the team members kicking in, with all members of the teams driven by the desire to win ‘gold’. It was at this point the groups began to demonstrate a sense of cohesiveness which is defined by Kayes, Kayes and Kolb (2005) as a “degree of camaraderie or esprit de corps” (p. 344). This was evidenced by team members actively encouraging one another by calling out the team name and/or individuals names during the team races, and constantly assuring one another that they were doing well, along with reasonably good natured sledging of the other teams. These observations concur with Greenberg and Baron (2008) who state that group cohesiveness tends to be strengthened with the threat of competition. The personal interviews also indicated that once the teams had got to know one another, they had established a common goal, that of winning, and were all very competitive. This was summed up by one of the interviewees who noted; “We are all similar in that respect, this industry would eat you up if you didn’t have that competitive streak, that’s why it was like…right it’s war, bring it on” This idea of similarities assisting in developing a cohesive unit is supported by Kayes, Kayes and Kolb (2005) who state that “smaller teams with members who have similar attitudes tend to be more cohesive than other teams” (p. 344).

Finally, as the teams really got into the activities, and the scores were being put up on the scoreboard, the teams moved into the performing stage, which according to Robbins et al. (2001) is summarised as moving forward and getting on with the task at hand. This stage was
observed towards the end of the competition as the teams became solely focused on winning the ‘gold medal’, and was characterised by the teams yelling words of encouragement, but little if any direct instruction to competing individuals was observed, as by this stage the teams had all worked out a winning strategy and were solely focused on crossing the ‘finish line’.

Baldwin and Keating (1998) discuss the forming of a team in their study of team building and their descriptions reflect the observations made by this researcher. Baldwin and Keating (1998) noted that the participants began the day as individuals, analysing every activity from their own perspective. The participants also expressed uncertainty about participating in the activities. Their comments referred to whether the activities would make them look foolish and whether in fact they would be able to complete the activities. This point was in fact raised by one of the interviewees from DiggerCo, who stated; “I think the worst thing about team building, and this may be common…it's the fear of making a fool or idiot of yourself”. However, once the teams began to get to know one another via the use of ice breaker activities, the individuals began to identity with the ‘team’ and were then able to work together to accomplish each of the activities.

**Summary of findings**

This research began with the question “what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?” The results and subsequent discussion indicate that the participants from DiggerCo were in fact able to identify several organisational benefits resulting from the team building activities. The key qualitative themes as previously noted in the results section and discussed in this chapter indicate that without exception the participants enjoyed the activities.
In terms of tangible organisational benefits, the most significant theme to emerge was the opportunity to meet and get to know other colleagues in the business. This was shown in the largely positive response to the questionnaire section pertaining to interpersonal relationship skills. The majority of participants agreed they felt better able to communicate with and understand their colleagues as a result of engaging in the team building activities. Furthermore, and an important finding for DiggerCo, is that over 70% were more likely to speak positively about the company outside of the workplace and the same number also agreed they felt more like ‘part of the family’.

The training manager echoed many of the comments made in the questionnaire and the personal interviews, and also noted that one of the company directors who was present for the day was thoroughly impressed with the facilitator’s delivery of the programme and that, in his opinion, the overall aims of the team building activities had well and truly been met. One other point of interest was the sheer positiveness of the results overall, irrespective of any other factors. The observations, the results from the questionnaires, the personal interviews, and conversations with some of the participants, training manager and one of the company directors who were present for the day all indicated an overwhelmingly positive experience with the team building activities.

The final interview was conducted with the training manager who was present for the two day programme. The first question related to the overall aims of the team building activities, and whether or not they had been met. The training manager believed the activities to be very beneficial, particularly in providing the participants with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the complex nature of teams, recognising the various skills each member brings to a team, and getting to know one another better. The training manager summarised
these points, noting; “Providing a setting that included fun and an element of competitiveness enabled the guys to learn more about each other in terms of working together…and judging from the feedback it was well received by the lads.”

5.3 FizzCo - Findings

As with DiggerCo, the key interrelationships between the design brief, observation, questionnaires and personal interviews are discussed and analysed in light of the literature regarding team building. The design brief for FizzCo was to base a team building programme around the Johari’s window model which formed the basis for the overall leadership programme. The model aids in understanding the individual’s interpersonal skills through disclosure and feedback. In addition to incorporating aspects of Johari’s model into the overall team building programme, the organisational development manager also wanted the participants to get to know one another better, work on individual and team communication skills, and reinforce the company’s values.

Overall views

The key interrelationships between the design brief, observation, questionnaire results and personal interviews involved four key areas, the first of which was overall enjoyment of the team building activities. The observation commenced with three ice breaker activities. The activities were designed to introduce the concept of Johari’s window model. The first activity involved disclosure of individual names, position in the company, favourite cartoon character and dream holiday destination. During the ice breaker activities the researcher had the opportunity to wander around the various groups and spend time listening to participants’
comments. Many of the participants referred to the activities as a great way to get to know their colleagues in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Other comments related to the facilitator encouraging everyone to participate and have some fun. Participants were initially asked to rate their overall enjoyment of the team building activities, which resulted in 95% of the participants strongly agreeing/agreeing that they had enjoyed the activities. The participants were then asked to briefly explain their responses. Two key themes emerged as a result. The first theme was ‘well facilitated and enjoyable’ illustrated by comments such as;

“The activities were well facilitated, and fun…most important!” , “Really in to it, good activities” , “The activities matched the objectives and were well planned and presented”, “The activities appeared to be well structured and allowed the members to feel comfortable and work together, the environment was great and the participants were not put on the spot”.

The second theme to emerge was ‘meeting other colleagues’ and participants’ comments in support of this theme included:

“It was a great opportunity to meet other people that the business regard as high potential”, A great opportunity to work alongside other members of our organisation who have never met before” and “A fantastic way of meeting people”.

The organisational development manager also acknowledged the importance of providing opportunities for the participants to meet each other saying;

“Another benefit is breaking down the high performance individuals in the business. The team activities provided that opportunity by having mixed groups across the business units and also
across levels of management…it provides opportunities to set up relationships in the future, understand other business units and perhaps even open people up to ringing those people as mentors…perhaps to pick their brains”.

The third key theme to emerge was enhanced/increased communication. As part of the design brief was for the participants to give and receive feedback, and work on the way they communicated with colleagues, all of the activities were designed to provide opportunities for this to occur. 71% of the participants agreed that they felt better able to communicate with their colleagues as a result of the team building activities. During the personal interview the organisational development manager noted the importance of encouraging communication skills through the activities, saying; “One of the key ways you achieve things is working with others and understanding your strengths and their strengths…the key way we do that is through communication. We need to be able to involve activities that involve communicating to achieve the end goal”. Corroborating the organisational development managers comments, one of the interviewees noted; “The benefits of the activities were really around where I fitted into the team environment and how I communicated with others and how clear if at all my communication was. The way I spoke to others, the words I used…it put you in a position where you had to communicate effectively with people…and you received feedback from others if you weren’t communicating in a very clear way”. The researcher was interested in whether the improved communication was a direct result of participation in the team building activities, asking one of the participants during the interview. The one word response was; “Definitely”. Another interviewee, when asked if there had been any change in their communication skills, said; “Yes, and the type of communication has changed. It’s not as formal as it was, I can pick up the phone now rather than sending an email, casual quick conversations, because they know who you are now, which is a good thing”.

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Prior to one of the team building activities commencing, each participant was allocated a ‘secret buddy’ whom they were asked to observe and, at the conclusion of the activities, the secret buddies were revealed and they then spent some time together discussing the activity, how they had contributed and how they rated their communication skills. The facilitator then invited the pairs to share some of their feedback with the group as a whole. The majority of the participants related the activity back to the workplace, which was interesting, as the underlying objective of utilising metaphoric activities was to encourage the participants to relate the activities back to the workplace. Relating the activities back to the workplace was summarised by one of the interviewees, saying; “I could relate every activity we did back to the workplace, to some sort of work function. I could see it without it being explained to me … why we were doing the activities, and what we were supposed to get out of it. You could definitely tell that they were activities that related back to work”.

As earlier noted, few of the participants knew each other prior to arriving at the resort. The fourth theme to emerge therefore proved an interesting finding. The participants were asked whether their level of trust and confidence in their colleagues had increased as compared with prior to the team building, 83% strongly agreed/agreed that it had. While the questionnaire did not ask the participants to explain their reasons for increased levels of trust and confidence, and it was difficult to ascertain specific reasons during the observation, the personal interviews did indicate that being part of an ‘elite’ group may have been a contributing factor. One of the interviewees made the connection, stating; “We were all similar, in that we were all a ‘type’ of person where everyone wanted to participate. I believe it is because we are all like minded, you know we are all managers who have been defined as high potential, we were all there because we have the right attitude”.
Key to the overall design brief was giving and receiving feedback, and this also contributed to developing a sense of trust and confidence in colleagues. This was echoed in the organisational development manager’s earlier comments regarding setting up future relationships in order to seek advice, assistance or even mentoring. This point was also raised by one of the interviewees who noted; “I would not have considered doing this prior to the team building, but I am now happy to call a colleague to get some feedback on something that I have sent through. I called that person to see if my communication was clear…do you think that everyone will understand it, is there anything I could have done better?” The final question in the overall views section asked whether participants felt better able to understand their colleagues as a result of the team building activities. Again 83% strongly agreed/agreed and this also provided significant support for the preceding two questions.

**Problem solving**

The questionnaire section pertaining to problem solving revealed that 53% of the participants felt better able to identify and evaluate problems as a result of the activities, with 65% feeling better equipped to implement and resolve solutions to problems in the workplace. The fact that just over half of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed with both of the questions is nonetheless significant. The team building activities all incorporated an element of problem solving which included identifying the best approach to the problem, evaluating options and then implementing the final decision. The personal interviews added further support to these findings. Observing the problem solving activities proved valuable in that it enabled the researcher to watch the teams come up with various strategies. The organisational development manager noted the value of activities that involve problem solving, stating:
\[ \text{It was important to incorporate problem solving and decision making which probably meant compromising (laughs) and negotiating, but essentially they have a restricted period of time to achieve something and it forces them to do it in that time...and they all did!} \]

\textbf{Goal setting}

As with DiggerCo, individual goal setting was not able to be observed (other than short term goals of successfully completing the activities) so this part of the discussion relies on the questionnaire and personal interview responses.

The two questions relating to goal setting resulted in similar responses to the problem solving questions. The first question asked participants whether they felt motivated to set goals to assist them in their workplace performance, which resulted in 65% either strongly agreeing or agreeing. The following question asked whether the participants felt better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities, and this resulted in 53% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the question. A possible explanation for these responses may be a cross-over between the overall leadership programme and the team building activities. During the interviews the researcher asked the participants whether their answers were specific to the team building activities or a combination of the leadership programme and the team building activities. However, the two interviewees were both adamant that their responses to the interview questions were a direct result of the team building activities. Both of the interviewees noted that they felt more motivated to set goals upon returning to the workplace due to the facilitator reinforcing the importance of goal setting during the activities. One of the managers commented;
“The whole idea of goal setting became an attractive proposition when one could see the results of a well thought out plan”.

Organisational commitment

Along with several other academics, Redman and Snape (2005) suggest that organisational effectiveness is enhanced in organisations where organisations are able to elicit high levels of commitment from their employees. Meyer and Smith (2000), Bartlett, (2001), Tansky and Cohen (2001) have all noted that a well facilitated team building programme can be instrumental in gaining and/or enhancing employees’ levels of organisational commitment.

While the first question in the organisational commitment section elicited a response of 47% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they felt more committed to the organisation and less likely to leave as a result of the activities, a higher positive response rate (71%) resulted from the following question which related to feeling better about the organisation and more likely to talk positively about the organisation outside of the workplace. ‘Feeling more like a part of the family’ resulted in an unequivocal 100% positive response, with 71% strongly agreeing and 29% agreeing. This result lends support to the literature that states that an employer investing in a training and/or development programme is viewed positively by employees and is reciprocated by the employee in the form of increased organisational commitment (Benson, 2006). As with DiggerCo, it is acknowledged that the employees that agreed to participate in the personal interviews may have held stronger views than those that did not, however the results from the questionnaire and the personal interviews do tend to support the overall positive results. The questionnaire asked participants to expand on why the team building
activities were beneficial to their organisation, and many of the qualitative comments reflected the importance of being acknowledged by the company, for example;

*I believe it makes a clear statement that you are important to the business and by attending such events, it is a sign of recognition and appreciation*, “*We are clearly important and have been recognised as such, so it’s really a good thing to be involved in*” and “*Further commitment to the organisation, particularly as a result of their investment in us as a team*”.

One of the personal interviewees also commented on the value of being recognised by the company noting; “*My key view about the team building activities is it is lovely to be invested in…its fantastic that our company invests in us in this way*”. In support of acknowledging the high performance team, the manager responsible for organisational development noted that part of the overall purpose of the team building activities was in fact to; “*Have some fun and celebrate and acknowledge the efforts of those people*”.

In light of the positive questionnaire responses to ‘talking more positively about the organisation’ and ‘feeling more like part of the family’ the researcher was interested in possible reasons for the 47% split between neither agree nor disagree and strongly agree or agree to the question regarding ‘feeling more committed to the organisation and thus less likely to leave in the near future’. One of the interviewees provided an interesting insight when asked whether their level of commitment had altered as a result of the team building which resulted in the following response; “*I think, already, I was committed to the organisation, but...I think the way I am committing to the business has now changed. I am more willing to put my hand up for things, more willing to get involved in different parts of the business, more willing to learn about other parts of the business. I am now asking a lot*”.
more questions about the business and expecting more in return…it is the way I use my time here that has changed, so that’s where I think my change in commitment comes from”.

One of the interview participants’ comments may shed some light on the reason for the lower positive response rate to the question regarding ‘feeling more committed to the organisation and less likely to leave in the near future as a result of the team building activities’. Some of the participants may have already been committed to the organisation, as the comments made by the interviewee quoted above show but, as a result of the company’s recognition and investment in them, they are perhaps even more likely to talk positively about the organisation outside of the workplace. Recognition by the company as being part of an elite group within the business also contributed to feeling ‘more like part of the family’. A secondary factor which may also have contributed to a lower positive response was the second part of the question which was ‘less likely to leave in the near future’. This may have resulted in some of the participants not wishing to commit themselves to such a definitive response, but instead indicate their commitment by agreeing with the other two organisational commitment questions.
Summary of findings

The four key themes to emerge from the physical data and the observation were: overall enjoyment, meeting other colleagues, increased/enhanced communication, and feeling better able to understand, trust and have confidence in colleagues. Although only short term goal setting was observed amongst the teams, the questionnaires and personal interviews did provide some support for the participants being more inclined to set goals that would assist them with their overall job performance. The problem solving section resulted in just over half of the participants agreeing that they had benefited from the team building activities in terms of being better able to identify and evaluate problems, and 65% agreed that they were in a better position to implement and resolve problems in the workplace. Another interesting finding was the fact that many of the participants indicated they were more likely to talk positively about their organisation outside of their workplace, and felt more like part of the family as a result of participating in the team building activities.
5.4 Cross case analysis 1 - Similarities strongly agree/agree

The overarching aim of this research was to assess what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities; as perceived by the participants. As such the similarities are based on the most significant positive questionnaire responses (strongly agree/agree). Of the twenty-one questions in the questionnaire, despite somewhat different objectives, both case study organisations reported eight similar responses. The first similarity clearly shows that the team building programmes were well received by both client groups. As this was an a priori objective for both of the organisations, both training and development managers were delighted that this objective had been met.

Whilst both organisation design briefs had slightly different expectations of the team building activities, the same figure (76%) agreed that the activities had positively impacted on their workplace. Several of the interviewees attributed this positive impact on the workplace to enhanced interpersonal skills, specifically those related to communication and better understanding their colleagues. This finding is in line with Greenberg and Baron (2008)
who state that communication is essential to the development of interpersonal relationships. In addition, Robbins et al. (2008) state that “recognition of developing managers’ interpersonal skills is also closely tied to the need for organisations to get and keep high-performing employees” (p. 4). While both training and development managers commented on the importance placed by their respective organisations on the value of enhancing/increasing interpersonal relationship skills, the FizzCo organisational development manager explicitly referred to the value the company places on identifying and retaining high performers within the company.

As noted earlier in this thesis the questions regarding organisational commitment were included due in part to Benson’s (2006) observation that employers providing development opportunities are viewed more positively by their employees and this is reciprocated by increased commitment to the organisation. Whilst slightly less than 50% of participants across both organisations agreed they felt more committed to their organisation and less likely to leave in the near future, the majority (72% DiggerCo & 71% FizzCo) of the participants were more likely to talk positively about the organisation outside of the workplace as a result of the team building activities. It is interesting that the DiggerCo and FizzCo results are almost identical and, as noted in the findings for FizzCo, a possible reason for this is that the employees were not willing to give a definitive answer to this particular question, but indicated their commitment by the extremely positive responses to the following two questions. The researcher was present for both team building days, and had the opportunity to speak to some of the participants, the comments being made about both organisations were very positive. These positive comments were also expressed in the personal interviews and therefore it seems entirely feasible to assume that this reasoning may not be too far off the mark.
‘Feeling more like part of the family’ was an underlying aim for DiggerCo and was expressed as part of the overall programme via incorporating the company values and recently introduced new company theme; ‘clean green team’ and was reflected in both the qualitative and personal interview comments. FizzCo team building programme was based around the high performance team and their personal development, however it did incorporate the company’s core values and overall brand theme. ‘Feeling more like a part of the family’ found support from the FizzCo interviewees, who referred to the ‘family’ as the overall company, and the majority of the qualitative comments also made reference to the company as a whole recognising the high performance team by investing in their on-going development.

The final similarity which provided an interesting finding was the majority of participants (80% DiggerCo & 76% FizzCo) felt that the team building activities were of benefit to their respective organisations. The personal interviews along with the qualitative comments were reasonably unanimous in their reasoning for this; the opportunity to develop interpersonal relationships. This is a positive finding for both organisations as increasing and/or enhancing interpersonal skills according to Greenberg and Baron (2008) contributes to organisational effectiveness and, as noted in the introduction, the purpose of utilising organisation development techniques such as team building is to “improve organisational effectiveness and employee well-being” (Robbins, et al., p. 657). This finding therefore adds weight to the value of utilising these types of team building activities as part of an overall employee development programme, particularly when the focus is on interpersonal skills and developing a sense of belonging.
As with the similarities, the differences also produced interesting results. As earlier noted the design brief for FizzCo was based around the Johari Window model involving personal development. 83% of the participants from FizzCo felt that the activities were personally worthwhile and this is a positive outcome for FizzCo. The design brief for DiggerCo had a slightly different focus, and this may be one of the reasons for just over half of the participants feeling they had gained personally from the team building activities. There are a number of possible reasons for this. One may be the fact that the question regarding the activities being personally worthwhile was asked at the start of the questionnaire. Support for this line of thought is perhaps best explained by comments made by two of the interviewees. As the interview with the researcher progressed, and the interviewees reflected back on the activities, they were surprised at what they recalled, one noted; “…as I said, if you had asked me on the day, I would probably not have even thought... I mean like looking for the underlying stuff”. The other interviewee noted that; I am thinking of several things now that I have been talking with you, I didn’t put that in the questionnaire either…hmmm…in fact I will
probably think of some more stuff when you hang up”. Though neither was referring specifically to this question, it may be that this question would have been better placed at the end of the questionnaire, by which time some participants would have perhaps had more time to reflect on the activities as they worked their way through the questionnaire. However, despite the possible shortcomings in the way the questionnaire was structured, the overall results are still a worthwhile finding for both of the organisations, and does tend to provide support for incorporating team building activities into the organisations’ overall training and development programmes.

In complete contrast to FizzCo, of the twenty-five respondents from DiggerCo seventeen neither agreed nor disagreed that they felt more motivated at work, with only three agreeing they felt more motivated, and a total of five disagreeing altogether. The personal interviews did shed some light on possible reasons for this result, one of which was the fact that the DiggerCo two day conference was business based and the team building activities were designed predominantly to encourage interpersonal relationships. In contrast, FizzCo two day programme largely focused on personal development. The fact that the DiggerCo participants neither agreed nor disagreed does not however indicate that they are less motivated at work as a result of the team building activities, but rather it is perhaps a reflection on their overall thoughts of the team building. It was fun, it was great to meet and get to know colleagues and so on, but in their opinion this does not necessarily translate to increased levels of motivation. The interviews with the FizzCo participants also helped explain reasons for the discrepancy in the questionnaire results. The FizzCo team building programme was based around on-going personal development stemming from the company recognising and acknowledging an elite group of high performers which in turn further inspired and motivated those particular individuals upon returning to their respective workplaces.
Although there was a difference in opinion regarding the level of trust and confidence in colleagues, both organisations did show a positive response. DiggerCo indicated 52% strongly agreeing/agreeing, and FizzCo showed 83%. FizzCo participants spent a substantial amount of time together over the two day period engaging in activities that helped them identify their strengths, communication and leadership skills, and learning more about their colleagues which may have lead the majority of respondents to agree they had developed an increased level of trust and confidence in their colleagues. Conversely, DiggerCo did not engage in as many group activities during their two day programme other than the actual team building activities. DiggerCo however did show a significant positive response to enhanced communication and better understanding of colleagues. A possible reason for this may be that the duration of the team building was perhaps a little brief to support the development of trust and confidence.

Goal setting was discussed by FizzCo, but not covered in depth with DiggerCo, other than short term goals in regard to the team building activities. Therefore, the discrepancy in results is again not entirely unexpected. However, what is of interest is the eight from DiggerCo and the eleven from FizzCo that agreed the activities had motivated them to set goals that would assist them in their workplace performance, which shows that at least some of the participants gained additional benefits from the team building activities.

Both organisations showed a slightly reduced figure when asked if they felt better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of participation in the team building activities. Seven participants from DiggerCo and nine from FizzCo strongly agreed/agreed with this statement. This may be attributed to the fact that the questionnaires and personal interviews took place four weeks after the team building activities and while there may be several reasons for this,
including perhaps the most obvious, the participants simply did not wish to. However, assuming a more positive stance, perhaps not enough time had elapsed for the participants to commit to stating that they were in a position to achieve workplace goals. Alternatively, the participants may have not yet had time to set specific workplace goals.

Identifying and evaluating, along with implementing and resolving, problems were the final two areas of difference between the two case study companies. FizzCo registered a much higher positive response to both questions with 53% and 65% respectively. DiggerCo in contrast indicated 24% and 36% respectively to the questions. Both organisations elicited a higher positive response rate in relation to feeling better equipped to implement and resolve than they did in respect to identification and evaluation of problems in their workplace. One of the managers from DiggerCo provided a clue as to why this may be so. The manager noted that problems are often identified by those working at the ‘coalface’, it is then up to the managers responsible for that particular contract to provide solutions and ensure they are successfully implemented.
5.6 Cross case analysis summary

Key insights

The key findings indicate that participants from both case study organisations perceived the development of interpersonal skills as being one of the key organisational benefits resulting from the team building activities. Mazany’s (1995) definition of team building as an “investment in the people resource of an organisation” (p. 51) therefore seems entirely appropriate when benefits such as these are found as a result of team building. The benefit of developing and/or enhancing interpersonal relationships is supported by Greenberg and Baron (2008), who state team building activities that provide opportunities for participants to successfully develop interpersonal skills can then enable the participants to influence each other’s potential upon returning to the workplace, with the overall aim of improving organisational effectiveness.

Incorporating an element of fun was also important to keeping the participants engaged. This was indicated by the high percentage of participants who agreed they had enjoyed the team building activities. Rosenberg (2007), cited earlier, stated that one of the main criticisms of team building activities is that they are more about playing games than they are about altering behaviour observing that while they can be “fun and engaging” (p. 26) the team building activities often “do not have the desired effect when everyone returns to the office” (p.26). The findings in this research do not appear to support Rosenberg’s (2007) observation. The questionnaire responses and the personal interviews were undertaken four weeks after the team building and the participants and the managers responsible for training and development within their respective organisations have in fact, indicated a number of organisational
benefits being accrued as a result of engaging in the team building activities. This was particularly evident in the findings from FizzCo, indicating that, as a result of the team building activities, the participants felt better able to set goals that would enhance their workplace performance, they were more likely to approach their colleagues for help, advice or mentoring. In addition, the participants also noted that their communication skills had improved. The participants from DiggerCo, while not so effusive in their responses, did however note that, overall, the development of interpersonal relationships was important to their business. They also felt that the team building activities had had an overall positive impact on their workplace and, whilst not as significant, the participants’ ability to implement and resolve problems had also increased. As with DiggerCo, the participants from FizzCo also felt more like a part of the family, and were also more likely to speak positively about their company outside of their workplace.

Many of the participants also commented on the facilitator’s skills as being important to the overall enjoyment of the programme. Both the managers responsible for training and development also noted in their interviews the importance they placed on the role of the external facilitator. Both made the observation that including an element of fun in the activities helped to create initial buy-in and this was seen as crucial to keeping the participants engaged and therefore more open to the overall goals of the team building programme. Without an element of fun, both managers agreed that achieving the desired outcomes would have been made difficult. The two training and development managers also agreed that the design brief objective of incorporating an element of fun had been well and truly met. This finding was further supported by comments in the final section of the questionnaire which asked participants to describe their initial reactions to team building. Whilst FizzCo resulted in more positive comments overall, DiggerCo showed a more significant change in
post-event attitudes, with several participants saying they had enjoyed themselves and as a result were more open to the idea of participating in team building activities in the future.

Finally, the observation of DiggerCo resulted in the researcher being able to clearly identify four of the five stages of Tuckman’s model. This process was initiated by the use of the ice-breaker activities which then led to groups forming and connecting with other relatively quickly. While the stages were also observed in the groups from FizzCo, it was more evident with the groups from DiggerCo. The training manager from DiggerCo commented to the researcher that this quick development of “team spirit” would not have been as easily achieved had the overall programmes been undertaken in a less interactive manner.

In addition, the DiggerCo training manager saw this as an added bonus, as it enabled the groups to bond and therefore more quickly engage in the activities. This is not only a valuable finding for DiggerCo in particular, it also provides some measure of justification for incorporating team building activities into their organisational training and development programmes. In addition, it may be of some value to companies wishing to accelerate the process of better getting to know colleagues, and improving/enhancing communication skills.
6. Discussion

6.1 Research problem

This research began with the overall title of ‘team building - adding value or variety?’ The reason for this was the researcher’s interest in what, if any, organisational benefits would result from the use of team building activities such as those used in the two case studies in this research. Specifically, the researcher was interested in the participants’ and the training and development managers’ perceptions of the team building activities and whether or not they were able to identify any organisational benefits as a result of participating in the activities. Thus the research considered the question; “What, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities” as perceived by the participants and training and development managers.

6.2 Key findings

This chapter discusses the overall findings from both case study organisations and how they relate back to the research question. While both organisations had slightly different design brief objectives, the main focus for both was predominantly the development of interpersonal relationship skills. The results show that this objective was achieved by both organisations and this finding was also fully endorsed by both of the managers responsible for training and development within their respective organisations. Shivers-Blackwell (2004) provides support for this finding, suggesting that team building activities can be beneficial in “developing interpersonal skills, such as communication among team members” (p. 614). The benefits to an organisation resulting from the acquisition of interpersonal skills have been well
documented by academics such as Greenberg and Baron (2008), who note the importance of increasing/enhancing interpersonal relationships as making a valuable contribution to an organisation’s overall effectiveness. The final results however do not support Rosenberg’s (2007) contention that acquiring such skills also enables participants to create a more productive workplace. The results from DiggerCo and FizzCo indicate that very few participants felt that their workplace had become more productive as a result of the team building activities.

Although the team building activities did not, in the view of the participants, result in a more productive workplace, participants from both organisations did agree that the team building activities had a positive impact on their workplace as a whole. The personal interviewees’ comments indicated that getting to know and understand their colleagues in particular had in turn led to better communication which was the main reason for the positive impact on their respective workplaces. FizzCo interviewees also noted that enhanced trust and confidence had led the participants to feel more comfortable asking colleagues for help or advice, which also contributed to a positive workplace. DiggerCo registered a much lower positive response than FizzCo in terms of increased trust and understanding. It is difficult to tell whether this result may have been improved should the activities have been longer in duration and/or included activities that were specifically aimed at building trust and confidence.

While the team building activities for both organisations did incorporate an element of problem solving, the metaphor of workplace problem solving may not have been as clear to the participants from DiggerCo. The overall results regarding increased or enhanced problem solving skills being developed as a result of the team building activities proved to be inconclusive in terms of showing any significant difference in problem solving skills.
24% felt better able to identify and evaluate problems, only slightly more (36%) of the participants agreed that they felt better able to implement and resolve problems. One reason for the less than positive responses in the problem solving section of the questionnaire was provided by one of the interviewees who noted that in their industry it was often the supervisors working at the ‘coalface’ who identified problems. If they were not able to find a suitable solution, the problem was brought to the attention of the manager responsible for that particular area. A possible implication of this comment is that perhaps the managers felt that their problem solving skills were sufficiently developed. In contrast, FizzCo results showed a more significant response in reply to the same questions. 53% felt better able to identify and evaluate problems and although 47% neither agreed nor disagreed, 65% felt better able to implement and resolve problems in the workplace as a result of the team building activities. While feedback was sought by the facilitator regarding the challenges of working together on some of the problem solving activities for both organisations, the metaphors while acknowledged do not appear to have translated to any appreciable difference back in the workplace for DiggerCo. However, FizzCo participants do appear to have found some benefit in the problem solving activities.

The key finding revealed in the results of this study was the overall positiveness generated by participating in the team building activities. While this is not an organisational benefit in itself, it was seen by the participants as being very important to the overall success of the team building activities. This in turn allowed the participants to enjoy themselves in a relaxed, fun environment, and as a result the participants were able to develop interpersonal relationship skills by working on their communication skills, getting to know and understand one another, and, to some degree, develop a sense of trust and confidence in their colleagues.
Contributing to this overall positive feeling was the role played by the external facilitator. This is supported by all of the interviewees and both training and development managers who acknowledged how important the facilitator had been in ensuring the activities were entertaining and engaging. This was attributed to the facilitator keeping the participants fully engaged by bringing a sense of energy and passion to the proceedings, without which, as one of the interviewees noted, the day would have been “boring”. The findings support the training and development managers’ decision to employ an external facilitator, and also concur with Priest and Gass (1997), Wheelan (2005), and others, who note the importance of using a facilitator who has sufficient knowledge and experience to design a team building programme that is suited to the client’s unique needs. These findings do not support Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) who suggest that team building activities are ineffective for a number of reasons, the main one being the use of an external facilitator. This they say, is due to their unfamiliarity with the organisation. The positive comments regarding the use of an external facilitator were a result of utilising a facilitator who bought a sense of passion and fun to the proceedings, along with a clearly designed brief that outlined the company’s key objectives and expected outcomes, which were developed in conjunction with both the client and the facilitator. These factors resulted in activities that met the overall aims of both programmes and were well received by the participants. Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) also cautioned against undertaking team building activities off-site, as there was no value to be gained from working in an environment that bears no relationship to the workplace. However, the comments from the participants and the training and development managers differ from Mealiea and Baltazar’s (2005) suggestions. In both cases, the activities were undertaken away from the workplace and this was seen as a good thing by the participants and the training and development managers. Indicative of the overall feelings regarding the team building activities being undertaken off-site was the comment made by the organisational development
manager from FizzCo who stated that it was good to “just get away from the pressures of the workplace and have some fun”.

This research adopted a case study approach and by its very nature relies heavily on subjective rather than objective data. However, the data collected via the observations, questionnaires, personal interviews and design briefs pointed to the participants feeling more like a part of the family, and more likely to speak positively about their respective organisations outside of their workplaces. While the majority of participants adopted a neutral stance in indicating they were more likely to remain with the company, the positive responses noted above nevertheless do demonstrate a commitment to the organisation. Employee attitudes as noted by Boshoff and Mels (2000) are important to an organisation as they can erode or enhance a company’s reputation. As both of these companies have a high public profile, this is a significant and very positive outcome for them.

Salas et al. (1999) state that while team building is “still an extremely popular and common intervention” (p. 309) much of the team building literature reviewed for their meta-analysis showed “mixed, vague or non-significant results” (p. 309). Salas et al. (1999) concluded that there was an overall lack of beneficial effects resulting from the use of team building activities. However, Salas et al. (1999) did go on to state that “further research is needed to examine other conditions under which team building may be more effective” (p. 324).

One of the conditions that contributed to the overall effectiveness of the team building activities in this study was the fact that the activities were designed specifically to reflect the needs of the organisation and were enjoyable, as specified in the design briefs. The importance of designing a programme that is suited to each client’s unique needs is noted by
Priest and Gass (1997). Including an element of competitiveness reflected the nature of the industry within which DiggerCo operates and the data gathered from the participants in this study indicated that the team building activities were particularly well received because of this. The design brief for FizzCo was to support the overall aims of the high performance leadership programme with a focus on personal development. From the ice breaker activities that encouraged disclosure of some personal details through to the ‘secret buddy’ observations, the activities all provided opportunities for the participants to get to know one another on a more personal basis, work on their communication skills, and overall self-awareness.

Another condition for the overall success of the team building activities was the fact that the participants were alike, that is, they held similar views toward their organisation. This contributed to an overall sense of commitment by the participants toward their respective organisations. The combined results showed an overwhelmingly positive response to ‘feeling more like a part of the family’, and ‘being more likely to speak positively about their organisation outside of their workplace’. The interviewees from FizzCo stated that it was their opinion that being included in a group of like-minded people really made a difference in the way they approached the activities. They were there to work on self-development, and as a result were focused on getting as much out of the activities as they could. Their views were also supported by the majority of qualitative comments made in the questionnaire. In addition, FizzCo participants also expressed their satisfaction in being recognised by their organisation as being special and worthy of development. The participants from DiggerCo, while not as effusive in their descriptions of being recognised by the company, still expressed a commitment to the organisation through their overwhelmingly positive response to the questions regarding ‘feeling more like a part of the family’, and being ‘more likely to speak
positively about their organisation outside of their workplace’. These findings are in line with Meyer and Smith (2000), Bartlett, (2001), Tansky and Cohen (2001) and Benson (2006) who note that employee satisfaction with development opportunities in general is positively related to organisational commitment. Benson (2006) also notes that employees who are satisfied with development opportunities are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes toward their organisation. Conversely, Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) note the absence of commitment can reduce organisational effectiveness. Team building falls within the realm of organisational development which is concerned with enhancing organisational effectiveness and employee well-being. Therefore, it can be said that in this study, the team building activities contributed to the participants exhibiting positive attitudes toward their respective organisations, which in turn, according to the literature contributes to organisational effectiveness and employee well-being.
7. Conclusion

This research has identified several organisational benefits stemming from the use of team building activities that are metaphorically analogous to the workplace. Specifically, it appears that overall the team building activities were instrumental in the further development of interpersonal skills, particularly, communication and better understanding of colleagues. Commitment to their respective organisations was demonstrated by the participants in the form of being more likely to speak positively about the organisation outside of their workplace. The majority of participants also said they felt more like a part of the family as a result of the team building activities. These are the key benefits as identified by the participants and certainly provide support in justifying the inclusion of the team building activities in to the overall training and development programmes run by DiggerCo and FizzCo.

While the FizzCo interviewees were adamant their opinions regarding perceived benefits were solely based on the team building activities, this researcher believes, that their perceptions were in part, due to a combination of factors. Being recognised as part of an elite high performance team, the team building activities being used in support of an overall leadership and personal development programme and the fact that the 21 participants spent a considerable amount of time working closely together, all contributed to the FizzCo participants’ overall positive perceptions. DiggerCo on the other hand, while not showing any significant results in increased/and or enhanced trust and confidence, did nevertheless, show distinct similarities in several areas to FizzCo, specifically, communication, increased/enhanced understanding of colleagues. In summary, the results of the questionnaires, interviews, and observations indicate that the development of interpersonal relationships were
perceived by both case study participants as being the most significant in terms of organisational benefits resulting from the team building activities.

The success of any team building programme relies on the participating individual’s perceptions. That is, the structure of the programme and how it is delivered will all inform people’s overall perceptions of the programme. Whilst having fun led the participants to agree they had enjoyed the activities, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive responses to the questionnaires, having fun is not a direct organisational benefit. However, had the activities not been entertaining, the participants, and some by their own admission, would not have actively engaged in the team building activities. It could therefore be inferred that team building activities including an element of entertainment are more likely to result in the participants being more willing to engage in the activities, which then provides an opportunity for the underlying objectives of the team building to be introduced via interactive activities.

The differences between the two case study organisations reflect to some degree the different programmes in which the team building activities took place. The two day programme for FizzCo was based on personal development and the team building activities were designed to support this. In contrast, DiggerCo two day programme was business development and the training manager wished to provide an opportunity for the ‘lads’ to get out of the classroom, meet and get to know their colleagues better, recognise the complexities of teamwork, and have some fun. The differences therefore could be said to accurately reflect the expected outcomes of each of the case study organisations.

Rosenberg (2007) notes that one of the main criticisms of team building is that the programmes are often more about playing games than they are about changing behaviour, and
that while the activities can be “fun and engaging often they do not have the desired effect when everyone returns to the office” (p. 26). In terms of this research, while the participants clearly did have fun, and the activities were engaging, the results of the data collected four weeks after the team building activities, as perceived by the participants and the training and development managers, do in fact point to distinct organisational benefits being accrued to both organisations.

Therefore, in answer to the research question, it appears there are definite organisational benefits, as perceived by the participants, accrued through the use of team building activities such as those utilised in this study. In conclusion, and returning to the title of this research; *Team building - adding value or variety?*, the results of the two case studies show that the inclusion of team building activities for both organisations’ overall training and development programmes not only added variety, but resulted in definite value for both the participants and the organisations themselves. Therefore, it could be said that, in fact there is value in adding variety.

### 7.1 Limitations

Research into team building is difficult due in part to the vast array of team building activities available, which in turn has spurned an equally vast array of literature. The main problem for this study lay in endeavouring to first define team building and this was further complicated by the term ‘team building’ being used to describe widely dissimilar activities. Added to this, is the lack of rigorous research into the benefits or lack thereof of utilising team building activities such as those used in this study. Therefore a limitation of this study is that it investigates only one kind of teambuilding activity in a wide field of possible alternatives.
Another potential limitation identified at the start of this research process was the possibility that the interviewees may not have been entirely forthcoming in their responses. However the interview and questionnaire findings were found to be consistent. The interviewees had no reason to be anything but open and honest as the interviews were entirely anonymous. The interviews were also deliberately semi-structured in order to provide a non-formal interview environment, it was hoped that this would put the interviewees at ease and provide a more conducive environment in which they could share their real opinions. The researcher does however acknowledge that some of the interview respondents may have been influenced by social desirability bias and recorded more positive responses as a result.

### 7.2 Recommendations for future research

The team building activities that formed the basis of the two case studies are far removed from what many people may consider to be ‘team building’ in the traditional sense. During the preliminary research for this thesis, the researcher was surprised to find that whilst there is still a market for the more traditional team building activities such as ‘outward bound’ type courses, there has been a gradual shift to more creative, innovative activities that do not require a great deal of physical strength and can be undertaken in almost any location either in or outdoors. There has been little if in fact any recent research undertaken in New Zealand on this emerging trend. Therefore there is an opportunity for further research into the use of such activities that are designed to reflect workplace issues and the role a facilitator plays in the overall success of such team building activities. As this study has shown, these activities add not only value but also variety and as such a possibility exists for research into the use of team building activities as used in this study to be incorporated in to overall employee development initiatives as opposed to being used as one-off events.
Finally, if this study was to be replicated, it would be worthwhile doing so with two control
groups. This would allow for participant perceptions to be more clearly evaluated in terms of
the perceived benefits of team building activities. Further study into the effects of team
building activities is important, it is a common and popular organisational development tool,
but it is often used without any clear reason as to why it is being undertaken, or what
outcomes are expected as a result. No wonder the benefits of team building are described as
being somewhat vague and ill-defined.
References


Sunday Star Times Magazine, 2008, September 7, P.8


Appendix A - Team Building Questionnaire

Survey questionnaire

“What, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?”

Instructions - please read carefully.

I am an independent researcher conducting research on the benefits of team building for my Master of Business degree thesis. Your opinions regarding the team building activities at Huntly (September 15-16) will be very helpful to my research. Your responses will be kept confidential and you will not be personally identified in this study. It should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer as many questions as you are able to as accurately and honestly as you can. If you complete this questionnaire as an electronic copy, please save your copy, and then return it as an attachment to the email address below. If you would prefer to print out and complete, please send the completed questionnaire to the address below.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.
Principal Researcher - Deb Cresswell - Email: oldrocka@hotmail.com

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2008.863

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 July 2008 to 15 July 2009. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Section 1:

Please answer all of this section by typing/writing an ‘X’ in the appropriate boxes.

Gender: □ Male □ Female

Age: □ 18-25 □ 26-35 □ 36-45 □ 46 and over

Length of time employed by this organisation:

□ 1 yr or less □ 1-3 years □ 3-5 years
□ 5-7 years □ 7+ years

Highest level of education: high school certificate, polytechnic, university qualification (diploma, certificate, degree) post-graduate qualification.

Current position in company:

□ Senior Management □ Management □ Non- Management
### Section 2:

Thinking about your recent team building activities, please indicate your response by typing/writing an ‘X’ in the column that is most appropriate.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Overall I enjoyed participating in the team building activities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Please briefly explain your response:</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Overall the team building activities were worthwhile to me personally.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I feel my workplace environment is more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>I feel more motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>I feel more de-motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The team building activities will help improve my job performance now and in the future.</td>
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7. Overall, I feel that the team building activities had a positive impact on my workplace as a whole.

8. Thinking about the team building activities, what in your opinion was particularly beneficial in terms of improving overall workplace performance?

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<th>Section 3:</th>
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<tr>
<td>I feel that I am better able to communicate with other members of my team as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compared with before the team building activities, my level of trust and confidence in my colleagues has increased.</td>
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<td>I feel that I better understand my colleagues as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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### Section 4:

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>As a result of the team building activities I feel more committed to the organisation and I am less likely to leave in the near future.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>As a result of the team building activities I feel better about the organisation and am more likely to talk positively about it outside of my workplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>As a result of the team building activities I now feel like a ‘part of the family’ in my organisation.</td>
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### Section 5:

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<th></th>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I feel the team building activities motivated me to set goals that will assist me in my workplace performance.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Compared with before the team building activities, my workplace has become more productive.</td>
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### Section 6:

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I am better able to <em>identify and evaluate</em> problems in my job as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I am better equipped to <em>implement and resolve</em> solutions to problems in my workplace as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Overall, do you feel that the team building activities have been beneficial to your organisation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>If so, please briefly explain:</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Please describe your initial reaction when you first heard that you would be participating in team building activities?</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Referring to question 22, has your attitude towards team building activities changed? Please briefly explain your response:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix B - Personal Interview Schedule

1. To begin with could you tell me about your thoughts on the team building activities you participated in at Huntly.

2. Reflecting on the team building activities, do you think there it was a worthwhile experience from your perspective? For the organisation?

3. What, if any, benefits were accrued to the organisation as a result of the team building activities?

4. Are you aware of what others thought about the team building activities? i.e. awareness of others perceptions/ others discussing it?

5. As a result of the team building, do you think communication between your colleagues and yourself has changed? How/why?

6. In terms of interpersonal relationships, do you think there has been any change as a result of the team building activities? (how well you get on/understand your colleagues).

7. Has your level of commitment to the organisation changed as a result of the team building activities?
8. In general, do you feel that you have benefited personally from engaging in the team building activities? How/why?

9. What are your thoughts on the overall facilitation of the team building activities?

10. Finally, do you have any comments or observations to add?
Appendix C - Training Manager’s Interview Schedule

Training/Development Manager’s Personal Interview Schedule

Could you tell me about your observations/thoughts regarding the team building activities? (including any feedback)

Could you summarise the overall purpose of the team building activities?

According to the literature team building falls within the realm of organisational development which is primarily concerned with improving/enhancing organisational effectiveness and overall employee well-being, what are your thoughts on this in relation to using team building?

What in your opinion are the benefits of employing this type of team building to your organisation?

In your opinion, how useful were the team building activities in terms of achieving the overall objectives and aims as per the design brief?

Do you think there were other ancillary benefits gained as a result of participation in the team building activities?

Would you use these types of activities as a part of your overall training and development initiatives again? Why?
Team Building - Adding Value or Variety?

By Debra Anne Cresswell

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business

Unitec Institute of Technology
Declaration

Name of Candidate:  Debra Anne Cresswell

This Thesis, entitled Team Building - Adding Value or Variety, is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Business.

Candidate’s declaration:

I confirm that:

- This Thesis represents my own work;

- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.

- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Candidate’s Signature:  …………………………        Date:   … ………………………

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number:  2008.863

Student ID Number:  1194537
Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr Simon Peel for his assistance, advice, guidance and patience. I would also like to thank Dr Ray Meldrum for his invaluable advice and feedback. I have thoroughly enjoyed the past twelve months. I have acquired many new skills, and learned some valuable lessons along the way, and for that I am extremely grateful to you both.

Thanks to Glenn Browne, an inspiring facilitator and now, a good mate. I would also like to thank my Mum, Emma and Chelsea for their love, help, support and patience over the past two years. To my good friends; Leigh, for all her help, without which, this project would have been far more challenging, and Lindsay for his patience and advice. Cheers to you both.

A big thankyou to Cynthia, her helpful, thoughtful and cheery manner was much appreciated. Thanks also to Deepa, who provided valuable assistance whenever I needed it. Thanks also to Glenis at the Business School for her kind assistance over the past two years.

Thanks also to the participants who took part in this research, and to Bill and Kerry for allowing me unlimited access, and making me feel so welcome.

A special thanks also goes to Mo and Dave, it was my good fortune to have met you both.

Finally, to my family and friends outside of Auckland, who supported me, providing words of encouragement, understanding and patience, a huge thank you.

Deb Cresswell

March 2009
Abstract

A case study approach was adopted in order to discover what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building. Two prominent New Zealand organisations were studied as they undertook innovative activities designed to reflect workplace issues such as problem solving, goal setting and interpersonal relationships. One organisation used team building activities to reinforce the importance of teamwork, provide opportunities for the participants to better get to know one another, and enhance communication skills. The second organisation used team building activities to support their high performance team programme, which included enhancing communication skills through the use of feedback, developing interpersonal relationships, along with effective problem solving and goal setting.

While the two case study organisations had slightly different objectives, the results show that the activities were particularly effective in developing interpersonal relationships and, to a lesser degree, goal setting and problem solving skills. Responses from both organisations point to the team building activities contributing to an overall sense of belonging to the organisation and participants from both organisations also reported they were more likely to talk positively outside of their workplace about their respective companies. In both case studies, participants felt that the team building activities had had a positive impact on their workplace and that, overall, the inclusion of such activities had been beneficial to their organisations. The participants also reported that the use of creative activities along with an element of competition assisted in engaging the participants and contributed to an overall sense of positiveness. The overall findings support previous research, and suggest that team building can add both value and variety, when used as part of an overall training and development initiative.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Objective and overview

Team building as a development initiative falls within the realm of organisational development. Organisational development according to French, Bell and Zawacki (1999) is concerned with addressing issues regarding the human resources of an organisation. Grieves (2000) notes that organisational development began to emerge as a subject in its own right during the late 1960s and early 1970s and at the time was primarily focused on planned interventions that contributed to increasing organisational effectiveness. By the 1990s it was possible to identify two key themes of organisational development; “personal development and organisational learning” (Grieves, 2000, p. 364). Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Waters-Marsh (2008) define organisational development as encompassing various planned change interventions that are “built on humanistic-democratic values that seek to improve organisational effectiveness and employee well-being” (p. 657).

Robbins et al. (2008) discuss planned change as having two main goals; assisting with an organisation’s capacity to adapt to changes in its environment and changing employee behaviour. One common planned change intervention according to Salas, Rozell, Mullen and Driskell (1999) is team building. Team building itself is not a new concept. As Porras and Berg (1978) observed thirty years ago, team building was “one of the most frequently used organisational development interventions” (p. 251). Decades later, Salas et al. (1999) state that team building is still an “extremely popular and common intervention” (p. 309). The focus of this thesis is the use of team building as an organisational development tool.
This chapter begins by providing a definition and background to team building and the key objectives that underpin team building interventions. The research problem and overall aim of this study is then introduced. The chapter concludes by outlining the overall structure of this thesis.

**Team building definition**

The term ‘team building’ is commonly used to describe various activities and much of the literature reviewed provides varying definitions and terminology. Salas et al. (1999) conducted an integrative study of team building and noted that one of the challenges in reviewing the literature was the sheer diversity of team building interventions. According to Salas et al. (1999) the ambiguous nature of the term ‘team building’ has lead to the term being defined quite broadly in extant literature encompassing interventions that are “conceptually quite dissimilar” (p. 324).

The literature reviewed for this research revealed a multitude of team building interventions ranging from physically challenging endeavours such as abseiling, rock climbing and other similar outdoor pursuits to ‘games’ that require few if any props, are not physically demanding, and can be undertaken indoors or outdoors and in almost any location.

Many academics have made a distinction between the act and purpose of team building. McShane and Travaglione (2003) define the act of team building in terms of improving work teams. Woodman and Sherwood (1980) discuss team building as planned interventions that focus on developing team problem solving and effectiveness and are facilitated by a third-party consultant whereas according to Toofany (2007) the purpose of team building is to
enhance organisational effectiveness. This is usually accomplished by undertaking tasks that contribute to or enhance the overall effectiveness of a team. Svyantek, Goodman, Benz and Gard (1999) narrowed the purpose via their meta-analysis of related team building research to enhancing the interpersonal and problem solving skills of team members.

Mazany, Francis and Sumich (1995) define team building as an investment in the “people resource of an organisation” (p. 51). Mazany et al. omit the term intervention instead opting for a more generalised definition which is significant as the term ‘intervention’ may imply that there is a problem requiring remedial action. This is an important distinction as both of the organisations who participated in this research (referred hereafter as ‘DiggerCo’ and ‘FizzCo’) did not view the team building as an intervention, but rather an acknowledgment of the importance of providing on-going training and development initiatives. As Robbins et al. (2008) observe, these activities ultimately contribute to the overall enhancement of organisational effectiveness and employee well-being.

For the sake of clarity and to also reflect the objectives of both organisations who participated in this research, the term ‘activities’ rather than ‘interventions’ is used for the balance of this thesis, unless the researcher is quoting a direct reference.

**Team building objectives**

Beer (1976), Dyer (1977), Buller (1986), Sundstom, De Meuse and Futrell (1990), Robbins et al. (2008) discuss team building as comprising four fundamental elements: goal setting, interpersonal relations, problem-solving, and role clarification. In undertaking background research for this thesis, and discussing the aims with various team building facilitators,
it became clear that goal setting, problem-solving and interpersonal relations were invariably
the most common drivers for businesses selecting team building as an organisational
development tool. With this in mind the selection criteria for this study stipulates that any part
of, or all of the three most common objectives, must form part of the overall design brief.
The omission or inclusion of any of the four objectives is in line with the Robbins et al.
(2008) observation that team building activities may incorporate any or all of these objectives
in varying degrees, and that the selection of the objectives is solely dependant on the needs of
the organisation at the time.

1.2 Research problem

Whilst many academics note that team building is a popular and frequently used intervention
and various positive outcomes may be claimed, the actual results according to Salas et al.
(1999) are often “mixed, vague or non-significant” (p. 309). Given such mixed results and the
fact that both of the case study organisations that formed the basis for this thesis invested
considerable time, money and resources engaging in team building, this researcher was
initially interested in why the organisations elected to engage in team building activities as
opposed to alternative training and development options. That is, was team building used as a
development tool with clear objectives and expected outcomes or just simply to provide
employees with a ‘fun day’ out of the office? The researcher was further interested in what,
if any, organisational benefits were subsequently realised; as perceived by the participants and
the managers responsible for training and development. Hence the overall title for this
research of ‘team building - adding value or variety?’
While the title reflected the researcher’s main objective, a firm question that would frame the research problem was still required. After reviewing various studies pertaining to team building, the research question was established and then further refined. This process reflects Creswell’s (1994) observation that research questions often evolve during the process of research, and may then be modified or further defined as the research progresses.

The research question originally used the term ‘intervention’. This was subsequently replaced with ‘activities’. The reason for this was two-fold because as already noted the term ‘intervention’ can be interpreted negatively implying a problem and the need for remedial action, which is not always the case for an organisation electing to participate in team building. Secondly, accompanying the trial questionnaires was a synopsis of the type of team building expected to form the basis of this research. After trialing the questionnaire many of the volunteers queried the use of the word ‘intervention’, finding it slightly ambiguous, given the information each volunteer had received. The research question was therefore amended to acknowledge this feedback.

The overall aim of this research was to understand what benefits, if any, were accrued to an organisation as a result of engaging in team building, as perceived by the participants and the managers responsible for organising the programmes. It is the perceptions of the participants combined with perceptions of the training and development managers that this research is concerned with.

Therefore the research question is:

*What, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?*
The literature reviewed for this research revealed several recommendations regarding the incorporation of specific objectives. The use of the phrase ‘organisational benefits’ is based on the inclusion of some of these objectives which, according to Wheelan (2005), are more likely to produce positive results than those team building activities that do not. It is these positive results that can potentially translate to organisational benefits. The use of the term “activities” specifically refers to activities that are analogous to the workplace, are not physically challenging, and can be undertaken indoors or outdoors in almost any location.

1.3 Research aim and justification

Greenberg and Baron (2008) have identified many benefits as a result of utilising team building activities, including interdependence, increased job satisfaction, and improved working relationships, conflict resolution and effective communication. The mere act of bringing members of an organisation together provides employees with opportunities to not only get to know one another but it also permits individuals to engage in activities that allow for personal growth and development.

In addition, Benson (2006) notes that an employer providing training or development opportunities is likely to be viewed more positively and this contributes to an overall sense that the employer cares about its employees which is then reciprocated by the employee in the form of increased commitment to the organisation. The concept of organisational commitment, while not a specified objective of this research, has been included as a potential ancillary benefit, as any change in the level of commitment by the participants will be of some interest to the two organisations participating in this research and any employers assessing organisational development options.
A significant disadvantage is seen in the one main criticism of team building; the programmes are more about playing games than they are about changing behaviour (Rosenberg, 2007). Rosenberg (2007) notes that while the activities can be “fun and engaging often they do not have the desired effect when everyone returns to the office” (p. 26). A further disadvantage is perhaps the way ‘team building’ is perceived. Participation in team building activities appears to generate various opinions, some positive, some negative. The latter view was well illustrated in a recent New Zealand Sunday paper supplement that stated there were five things in life that one had to just accept and get on with in life. Occupying the number one spot was the “team building away day” (Sunday September 7th 2008). Whilst this comment was perhaps intended as slightly tongue in cheek, the comment itself seems to epitomise the polarised views that permeate opinions regarding team building. Mazany et al. (1995) also refer to criticism regarding the use of team building as nothing more than an excuse for time off which is paid for by the company.

The overarching aim of this project is to identify what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities. Specifically, team building utilising metaphoric activities designed to reflect workplace issues, for example problem solving, interpersonal relationships and goal setting. Other matters arising from the research question such as the implications of utilising metaphor based activities for organisations within New Zealand contemplating this form of team building, and the role of an external facilitator are also explored in this study.
The key objectives of this research are listed below, followed by brief descriptions which are further elaborated on later in this thesis.

- To define metaphor based team building activities.

- To describe the organisational objectives and expected outcomes of both of the participating organisations.

- To identify the advantages and disadvantages of team building for both the organisation and the participants.

Metaphoric team building activities encourage a hands-on approach by all participants involving tasks that are metaphorically analogous to the workplace. For example, the construction of a catapult can be used as a metaphor to promote problem solving and communication skills. Each team is given a bag containing the catapult parts but without instructions or any indication of what the finished product looks like. Every member of the team is then provided with one or more photos of small sections of the catapult, shown in close-up or from an unusual angle. The photos cannot be viewed by other members of the team rather the team must communicate with each other by describing their photos and then work out how to put the pieces together within a set time limit.

This category of team building activities was selected as they represent a reasonably common form of team building. They are also suitable for a broad spectrum of New Zealand organisations and are relatively affordable and accessible. Furthermore the use of metaphoric
team building activities means that while they provide challenges, they do not involve any physical risk taking and are therefore suitable to most New Zealand workplaces.

Two large well-known organisations were chosen for this research and, while both had slightly different objectives, both met the criteria for this research regarding incorporation of some or all of the team building objectives underpinning team building activities. In summary, both organisations’ design briefs included challenging individuals to learn more from and about their colleagues through active participation in the activities, increasing/enhancing communication skills, further developing of a sense of ‘team’, and lastly that the activities be enjoyable. The rationale for the inclusion of two organisations reflected the need to be able to make a comparative analysis. Additionally, given the large quantity of data expected to be generated through the questionnaires and in-depth personal interviews, more than two organisations would have been impractical.

While Greenberg and Baron (2008) point to several benefits resulting from team building, and Salas et al. (1999) have noted the use of team building is widespread, little is known about the benefits of utilising the type of activities which form the basis of this study. Research of this nature is important as it will contribute to the extant team building literature and be of some interest to employers contemplating various development options. The overall aim of this research is to discover what, if any, are the organisational benefits of just one type of team building available in New Zealand, specifically team building utilising metaphoric activities to reflect workplace issues. It is the participants’ perceptions of the benefits of these team building activities that this study is concerned with.
1.4 Summary

Chapter one introduced team building as an organisational development technique. The act and purpose of team building and the four elements that underpin team building were then defined. The research problem was introduced followed by the research question and sub-questions. Advantages and disadvantages of team building were also discussed, leading to the overall aim and justification for this study being revealed.

Chapter two analyses and critiques the team building literature to date, followed by a review of the various methodological approaches employed by various researchers in the field of team building. Chapter three provides the rationale for the selected methodology and outlines the data collection and analysis methods employed in this study, including the ethical implications and limitations of this research. Results of this research are discussed in chapter four, and chapter five analyses the key findings. Chapter six discusses the findings, including key insights, limitations and future research recommendations. Chapter seven summarises the overall findings of this research.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Objective and overview

The objective of this chapter is to provide a review of relevant team building literature as it relates to the overall research question which, to reiterate, is “what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?”

This chapter begins by defining team building, as it is a term widely used to describe a myriad of activities. The sections which follow review the literature surrounding the benefits of team building, which are revealed in more depth, and this is followed by a description of the four key aims of team building which also includes a section on the five stage group life cycle. The concept of organisational commitment as an ancillary benefit is discussed, along with the use of metaphors to facilitate learning and the role of an external facilitator. This chapter then concludes with a summary of various methodological approaches employed by some of the academics cited in this thesis, providing additional support for the methodology chapter that follows.

2.2 The ambiguous term ‘team building’

The increasing popularity of team building has led to an extensive collection of literature where a diverse range of descriptions is used to define a broad range of related activities. A small but by no means exhaustive search reveals various team building descriptions including; outdoor adventure management development (Ibbetson & Newell, 1998), residential outward bound courses (Rushmer, 1997), outdoor training (Mazany et al., 1995, 1997), indoor
adventure training (Broderick & Pearce, 2001), corporate adventure training programmes (Gass & Priest, 2006) and experiential learning (Rosenberg, 2007).

The numerous labels incorporate various activities which fall under the umbrella term team building, leading Salas et al., (1999) to observe that the term itself is somewhat ambiguous and is often used to describe activities that are “conceptually quite dissimilar” (p. 324). To briefly illustrate the ambiguous nature of the term, Rushmer’s (1997) study involved a three day outward bound course in the Highlands of Scotland, and was based around physically demanding tasks undertaken in the first week of a post graduate programme with the overall aim of building teams at the beginning of the course. At the other end of the spectrum Broderick and Pearce (2001) outline what, at the time and in their opinion, was a revolutionary new approach to indoor adventure training advocating the use of a theatrical experience based around a haunted house theme that would assist in developing team work, problem solving and communication skills.

One of the difficulties in ascertaining what, if any, benefits accrue to organisations as a result of utilising team building activities is the sheer range of activities, organisations, participants and methodologies included in team building research. The lack of robust studies on the effect and effectiveness of teambuilding is in part due to conceptual and definitional issues and this has led to problems in evaluating the actual benefits of team building.

In terms of this research, there are two definitions of team building that most closely reflect the overall aims of the two organisations who participated in this research. The first definition, noted in the introduction describes team building as being “an investment in the people resource of an organisation” (Mazany, et al., 1997). The second definition by Toofany
(2007) points to team building being a way of “encouraging individuals to participate in activities together” (p. 27). These definitions have been selected by this researcher as the most accurate representation of the aims and objectives for both organisations involved in this research. The key objectives underpinning team building activities are now discussed as they relate to this research.

2.3 The fundamental objectives of team building

As noted in the introduction, according to several academics there are four key elements underpinning team building activities. While team building can be undertaken for a variety of reasons, in order to narrow the scope of this research and to provide greater focus and clarity, the researcher has chosen to focus on team building that includes some or all of just three of the four key objectives of team building which are defined in this section. Based on recent research, Wheelan (2005) supports the inclusion of all or any of these objectives suggesting that team building activities which include goal-setting, interpersonal relationships and feedback relating to participants’ performance and group development will work better than other approaches. Wheelan (2005) concludes that, until more research is undertaken, team building activities that include at least these three objectives are more likely to produce positive results than those that do not.

The three elements forming the rationale for the team building activities in this research are goal setting, problem solving and interpersonal relationships. The reason for this is in part based on Wheelan’s (2005) recommendations, combined with feedback elicited from various team building facilitators in the early stages of this research, regarding the most common objectives of team building activities that were of a similar type to those used in this study.
The inclusion or exclusion of some objectives concurs with Salas et al. (1999) and Robbins et al. (2008) observation that team building activities may incorporate any or all of the four fundamental objectives and that selection is entirely dependant on the needs of the organisation at the time.

Interpersonal relationships are concerned with improving team skills, such as communication, enhancing support, trust and confidence amongst team members. Team building activities can contribute to increasing and/or enhancing these skills via interactive activities which help participants overcome barriers to effective communication whilst providing opportunities for members to acknowledge their colleagues’ various styles. The underlying idea, according to Greenberg and Baron (2008) is that the participants are able to form positive relationships with one another and, as a result, the participants are in a better position to “influence each other’s potential back on the job” (p. 321). Acquiring such skills, according to Rosenberg (2007), will also enable participants to create a more productive workplace. Finally, Greenberg and Baron (2008) note the development and/or enhancement of important skills such as communication are key to organisational effectiveness, which is as previously noted one of the main objectives of organisational development initiatives.

Problem solving, according to Priest and Gass (1997), is closely related to decision making and judgement. The ability to identify problems and subsequently resolve them by ensuring that decisions made are based on sound judgement is a valuable skill in or outside of the workplace. Team building activities incorporating activities that are intentionally designed to reflect real-world challenges can often spark discussions about the many parallels found within the workplace (Rosenberg, 2007), such as the need for effective planning, or the importance of identifying problems and evaluation of subsequent solutions. Accordingly,
problem solving is included in this research, to see whether or not, the team building activities lead to any appreciable difference in identification and resolution of problems back in the workplace.

Team building that includes goal setting as an objective encourages individuals to develop individual and/or team goals by providing various tools that enable the participants to clarify and then work through ways to achieve those goals (Salas et al., 1999). According to Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe, and Waters-Marsh, (2001) the team building activities should focus on developing a shared understanding of the team mission and goals. In support of the benefits of goal setting to an organisation, Greenberg and Baron (2008) have noted successful performance within an organisation can be enhanced by goal setting.

The effectiveness of team building

Before we can look at the effectiveness of team building, it is first necessary to define the term effectiveness. The sheer diversity of team building activities represents one of the major challenges to making sense of the research literature on team building (Salas et al., 1999) and this is exacerbated by claims of various team building efforts being labelled as effective. What is not clear in some studies, however, is what makes team building effective, that is were the stated objectives achieved? Did the team building activities meet the expected/desired outcomes? Mazany et al. (1995) provides a succinct definition of effectiveness in terms of team building, stating that activities that can be considered effective are those that have “measurable positive outcomes that relate to defined objectives” (p. 64).
The concept of team building is certainly not new. Porras and Berg (1978) observed thirty years ago that team building was “one of the most frequently used organisational development interventions” (p. 251). Decades later, Salas and colleagues (1999) state that team building is still an “extremely popular and common intervention” (p. 309). One of the reasons for its continuing popularity may be the numerous benefits claimed as a result of engaging in team building activities. According to the literature reviewed for this research, organisational benefits include; improved decision making processes (Mazany et al., 1995), improved productivity (Svynatek et al., 1999), increased employee satisfaction (Longnecker & Neubert, 2000), improved team functioning (Klein, Salas, Burke, Goodwin, Halpin, Diazgranados and Badum 2006), enhanced interpersonal relationships (Toofany, 2007), and organisational commitment (Benson, 2006).

Despite such positive results being claimed, some academics such as Salas et al (1999) note that whilst team building may indeed be popular the actual results are often “mixed, vague or non-significant” (p. 309). Claims of increased performance as a result of team building, for example, lead Salas and colleagues (1999) to contend that due to the sheer diversity of team building activities available, the variety of organisations involved, and the various methodologies employed, very little empirical evidence actually exists to support such a claim. The Salas et al. (1999) observations echo those of earlier researchers, including Woodman and Sherwood (1980), DeMeuse and Liebowitz (1981), Druckman and Bjork (1994), Smither, Houston and McIntire (1996), who concluded after reviewing various academic papers regarding increased performance as a result of team building, that whilst positive results were reported, there was in fact no definitive evidence to support the claims made. Several years later, Sundstom et al. (1990) and Tannenbaum, Beard and Salas (1992) conducted another review of studies relating to increased performance resulting from team
building and found that, despite enthusiastic reports, there was again a lack of compelling evidence to support beneficial effects of team building on performance. Salas et al. (1999) included these observations in their meta-analytic study regarding the effect of team building on performance, noting that the initial literature review produced a “remarkable lack of convergence” (p. 312) on what studies should be included.

The overall aim of Svyantek et al. (1999) meta-analysis was to assess the relationship between organisational characteristics and team building success with a specific focus on if/how team building impacts on workgroup productivity and effectiveness. While Svyantek et al (1999) did not specify what type of team building activities were used by each of the studies included, their selection criteria included team building incorporating goal setting, problem solving, interpersonal relationships and role clarity which, according to Beer, (1976), Dyer, (1977), Buller, (1986), Sundstom et al. (1990), are the four key aims or underlying reasons for utilising team building activities. Other than the four aims noted above, Svyantek et al. (1999) final criteria stipulated that each of the studies to be included must have reported some change in objective productivity. Subjective estimates regarding productivity made by one of the group members involved in the team building or external to the group undergoing the team building was also acceptable. This resulted in 11 studies being selected for inclusion in the meta-analysis. The studies were drawn from a diverse range of industries such as mining, armed forces, assembly line workers, universities, and manufacturing plants. A positive change in productivity was measured by objective measures such as production quality (mining) and quality units and cost efficiency (assembly line workers). The subjective changes were measured by perceptions of group/individual/organisation/management effectiveness. The study noted several moderating variables which, in conjunction with the team building activities, were important; management support for the team building activities,
the use of other interventions in conjunction with the team building, the size and type of the organisation. In terms of the team building process, Svyantek et al (1999) concluded that a combination of goal setting and interpersonal relationships (which included problem solving and role clarity) had a higher average effect than those team building efforts that had a singular focus, for example goal setting. Team building using an external as opposed to internal facilitator also showed a significant average effect size, although the use of both an internal and external showed an even higher level of significance. The overall findings of the study supported Svyantek et al. (1999) hypothesis that team building in conjunction with the important variables as described in their study is effective in increasing workgroup productivity.

Based on previous research indicating that little, if any, conclusive evidence existed to support the contention that team building renders an increase in team performance, Salas and colleagues (1999) undertook a meta-analysis to assess the effect of team building on performance. As noted earlier, the diversity of team building activities represents one of the major challenges in making sense of the literature. Salas et al. (1999) however regarded such diversity as “a unique opportunity to gauge the relative impact of the four areas of team building” (p. 315). As such, these four areas formed the basic criteria for their meta-analysis and Salas et al. (1999) noted that this was an important goal of their research in trying to determine the relative contributions of those four areas to the team building performance effect. In order to do so, the study looked at several performance measures that had been used in earlier studies, such as team size and duration. Salas et al. (1999) stated that the key finding to emerge was the “overall insignificant and negligible effect of team building on performance” (p. 322). This study supported much of the earlier research by academics such as Druckman and Bjork (1994) who noted that the enthusiasm for the use of team building
activities to increase or enhance team performance “was not matched by strong empirical support for their effect on team performance” (p. 125). In terms of the overall effectiveness of team building, Smither, et al (1996) observed “research findings on the effectiveness of team building provide a complex mix of results that make drawing firm conclusions difficult” (p. 324).

Klein and colleagues (2006) meta-analysis examined the relationship between team training and team building in order to ascertain which strategy would be the most effective. Klein and colleagues assessed forty-eight empirical studies and concluded that both are successful across a wide range of settings, tasks and team types. Klein et al (2006) found reasonably strong support for the use of team building in improving team functioning. However, Klein et al. (2006) do add that despite the encouraging results, a note of caution is advised as definitive conclusions could not be drawn from some of the studies included.

Mazany and colleagues (1995) research focused on evaluating the effectiveness of an outdoor team building programme. Mazany et al (1995) noted that, while much of the published material to date (at that time) provided numerous suggestions on how to maximise the effectiveness of team building activities, none had actually pointed to any objective measures of effectiveness. Mazany et al. (1995) research focused on the use of a team building workshop which formed part of the overall orientation process for all students involved in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. A three day programme consisted of a mix of indoor and outdoor activities that were designed to provide opportunities for both team and personal development. The participants completed questionnaires during and at the conclusion of the programme relating to satisfaction with the programme, how well the team communicated and worked together, and whether or not individuals felt actively involved in
the process. Mazany et al. (1995) concluded that despite variations in the outdoor workshops and the questionnaire, the effect of the workshop on team development was positive. However they did go on to note that, while the techniques employed in evaluating the effectiveness of the programme had some merit, more effective techniques should be investigated.

A study by Rushmer (1997) also focused on MBA students participating in a three day outdoor team building programme. Rushmer (1997) notes that, from observation, students who are quickly able to integrate into the MBA group are more likely to successfully complete the intensive one year course, hence the provision of team building at the beginning of the academic year. Twenty-two participants were divided into three teams and were questioned prior to and at the end of each day’s activities, in order to ascertain whether anything had changed regarding themselves or their teams. Rushmer (1997) participated in the activities, as well as observing and conducting personal interviews and administering the questionnaires. Whilst Rushmer (1997) points out that the study only provides a snapshot, and that the research was to be converted to a longitudinal study at a later date, the students’ responses indicated an overall positive experience with the team building activities. Specifically, Rushmer (1997) suggests that team building activities that enable participants to mix freely and get to know one another in a relaxed environment, and that encourage all participants to contribute equally toward accomplishing tasks, are more likely to encourage participants to continue working as a team upon completion of the team building activities. In addition, Rushmer also suggests “restricting the formal appearance of hierarchy (in the form of a leader) in the team” (p. 325). This allows the participants to all contribute equally, with members of the team agreeing and supporting, prior to each task, the person who is deemed to be the most appropriate person to guide or direct the team through the task.
2.4 Organisational commitment

Many academics have noted that a well facilitated team building intervention can be instrumental in gaining and/or enhancing the employees’ level of organisational commitment, and this is supported by academics such as Meyer and Smith, (2000), Bartlett, (2001), Tansky and Cohen, (2001) and Benson (2006), who observe employee satisfaction with development opportunities in general is positively related to organisational commitment. According to Benson (2006), this relationship is based on theories of employee development that generally assume that employees who are satisfied with development opportunities are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes towards their organisation. Thus an organisation investing in employee development demonstrates a commitment to their employees which in turn is reciprocated by the employee (Benson, 2006).

Organisational Commitment has been defined as the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in their organisation. (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1979; Miner, 1992). Greenberg and Baron (2008) build on this definition, adding that the level of organisational commitment is demonstrated by the individual’s involvement in their organisation and their unwillingness to leave. Affective commitment is defined by Greenberg and Baron (2008) as the extent to which an individual identifies with the organisation’s overall values and goals. This is relevant in the context of this study as the organisational benefits of affective commitment by employees have been well documented (Arnold & MacKenzie, 1999). Considerable evidence has shown that affective commitment to an organisation is negatively associated with voluntary turnover (Williams & Anderson, 1991; Arnold & MacKenzie, 1999) and positively associated with work performance (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Furthermore, according to Williams and Anderson (1991), affective
commitment contributes to higher work effectiveness and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) along with lower absentee rates. Conversely, Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) note that the absence of commitment can reduce organisational effectiveness.

As the overarching aim of organisational development is to improve or enhance organisational effectiveness and employee well-being (Robbins et al., 2008), it would be remiss in a study investigating what, if any, organisational benefits are gained by utilising team building to omit organisational commitment. As noted in the introduction, a change, if any, in the levels of employee commitment as a consequence of the team building activities would be a beneficial outcome for the organisations involved in this research, in addition to being of some interest to employers assessing various organisational development options.

2.5 Using metaphorical activities to facilitate learning

The ultimate goal of using metaphorical activities is to enhance understanding of workplace issues (Priest & Gass, 1997). Structured metaphorical learning refers to intentionally designing or framing the activity prior to participation in a way which increases the probability of seeing the parallels between metaphorical activities and the workplace (Priest and Gass, 1997; Rosenberg, 2007). According to Rosenberg (2007), metaphorical activities should “spark discussion about the parallels within the workplace” (p. 27). Metaphorical activities may be used to highlight workplace issues such as problem solving, overcoming barriers to effective communication and building interpersonal relationships.
Mazany et al (1995) note that one of the key benefits of using metaphoric activities is the fact that when individuals engage in such activities they tend to act in a similar manner to how they would act at work, displaying such characteristics as co-operation, communication and leadership. Mazany et al (1995) go on to note that such characteristics can be then be discussed using specific reference to the activity as a metaphor for normal work circumstances, which in turn enables the participants to learn about themselves and their colleagues in a more positive, fun and constructive environment.

While almost any activity could be used a metaphor for the workplace, Ibbetson and Newell (1998) make a distinction between activities such as abseiling or rock climbing that typically require higher levels of physicality, and metaphoric exercises that are typically less physical and can be undertaken in almost any location. According to Ibbetson and Newell (1998), activities such as abseiling or rock climbing require very little review as the activities are “assumed to speak for themselves” (p. 240), whereas metaphoric activities are simply used as a “vehicle to highlight processes which are then the subject of a review led by the facilitator” (p. 240).

To briefly illustrate, a classic example of a metaphoric activity is the spider’s web. Participants are required to strategically pass their team through a rope web made up of different size holes and varying levels above the ground. This activity encourages participants to work together in order to get from one side of the web to the other without touching the ropes. This activity, according to Gass and Dobkin (1992), can be constructed around several metaphors which in turn form the basis for a group debriefing which encourages the participants to reflect on the activity and then discuss the parallels between the exercise and their workplace.
2.6 The role of an external facilitator

While the overall aim of this research was not to assess the role of an external facilitator, it is a related issue and therefore worthy of discussion. Early researchers in the field of team building included in their team building definitions the use of a third party facilitator, noting that they played a critical role (Woodman & Sherwood, 1980; De Meuse & Liebowitz 1981; Buller, 1986). Woodman and Sherwood (1980) observed that the role of a facilitator is to provide guidance and suggestions, rather than solutions or recommendations. Bens (2005) provides support for these early researchers, noting the role of a facilitator as someone whose prime goal is to support and enable others as they pursue their objectives, with the overall goal of enhanced group effectiveness.

Wheelan (2005) observes that, in terms of facilitated team building, the quality and duration of experiences can be as diverse as the range of team building activities on offer. The literature reviewed for this study included team building activities of varying duration, however it would appear that less has been written regarding the quality of team building experiences. Priest and Gass (1997) are two leading authors in the field of outdoor adventure team building programmes, and emphasise the importance of utilising experienced facilitators to improve the quality of team building experiences. Priest and Gass (1997) state that facilitators should have sufficient knowledge and experience in team building, adding that proper assessment is also crucial to enable the facilitator to design a programme that is suited to each client’s unique needs.

In collating relevant literature to be included in this review, it is evident that many academics support the use of an external facilitator. However, Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) adopt an
opposing view. They suggest that typical team building efforts are ineffective for a number of reasons, with the most important being the use of an external facilitator. According to Mealiea and Baltazar (2005), the problem with using an external facilitator is their unfamiliarity with the characteristics of the business. The authors state that team building activities should be conducted preferably by the training and/or development manager, and should be undertaken on site, pointing out that there is no value to be gained working in an environment that bears no relationship to the workplace. While this may be the case in some industries, or even the preference of some employers, Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) suggestions run contrary to those espoused by many academics in the field of team building, as noted in this section. Their views supporting the role of an external facilitator are further discussed in the discussion chapter.

2.7 Tuckman’s model of team development

Finally, this literature review would not be complete without discussing the concept of team development as described by Tuckman over forty years ago (Robbins, et al, 2008). Tuckman’s original model of team development incorporates five stages; forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The first stage is characterised by doubt and hesitation. As the individuals within the group get to know one another and strategies and rules are discussed, individuals tend to vie for roles within the group and the second stage is often characterised by friction and conflict between the individuals. If the group emerges relatively unscathed from the storming stages, the group is able to move onto the norming stage which is characterised by the individuals developing respect and understanding for one another. In other words, the group begins to exhibit a sense of cohesiveness. The fourth stage of performing is characterised by the group performing tasks as a cohesive unit. Adjourning
refers to the group completing the task or project and is, at this stage, concerned with making final arrangements for the dissolution of the group.

Robbins et al. (2001) state that there is no standard process or length of time for teams to move through the stages, and that while some teams may race through all the stages, some teams may shift between just two of three of the stages without reaching the final stage. Greenberg and Baron (2008) suggest the model is best thought of as a “general framework of group formation” (p. 296). This is due to the fact that the model does not account for organisational context. According to Robbins et al (2001), a strong organisational context provides employees with the rules, roles and resources to enable a group to perform the task of project effectively. Having a strong organisational context means that a group does not need to develop strategies, or decide on who is best suited to roles within the group, or locate and then allocate the resources necessary to perform the task at hand. As Robbins et al (2001) note, “since much group behaviour takes place within a strong organisational context…the model may have limited applicability in understanding work groups” (p. 274). One of the studies cited in this research indicates that effective team development can assist a team to move quickly through the five stage life cycle (Mazany et al., 1995) and, as this research is based on team building, the researcher feels there is some merit in including this model in the literature review as it remains an interesting tool in observing how individuals negotiate their way through the various stages of group formation.
2.8 Methodological approaches employed in team building research

The team building literature reviewed for this research revealed a multitude of methodological approaches across an equally broad range of industries involving a variety of participants and organisational objectives. For instance, the study by Mazany et al., (1995) employed a predominantly quantitative approach supported by ad hoc interviews to investigate the hypothesis that an outdoor team building workshop involving Master of Business Administration (MBA) students would positively impact on team development. Mazany et al. concluded that the measured effects were enduring and that, although minor changes to the structure of the questionnaires was recommended, the selected methodology was effective.

Rushmer (1997) also conducted a study of MBA students engaging in a three day outward bound team building programme, but opted for a predominantly qualitative approach using open-ended questionnaires (daily) and participant observation. Rushmer’s overall aim was to provide a snapshot account of the team building programme in the form of a case study approach which would then be converted to a longitudinal study. Rushmer (1997) concluded that the positive findings as noted earlier were convincing, despite the limitations on generalising as is typical of case studies.

A case study methodology was also adopted by Ibbetson and Newell (1998) in order to compare the effectiveness of a team building programme involving twenty-two managers from two different organisations using the same external facilitator. Collection of quantitative and qualitative data was aided by the use of previously validated questionnaires along with personal and group interviews. Ibbetson and Newell (1998) concluded that, whilst
generalisations could not be made, the case studies showed that perceived positive aspects of the programmes had been actively transferred back to the workplace.

Salas et al., (1999) undertook a meta-analysis of team building studies in order to gauge the relative impact of the four team building objectives on performance. Salas et al. excluded case studies and any other studies that reported positive outcomes without providing any objective data to support the findings. Salas and colleagues (1999) noted that, whilst they provided interesting reading, they did not offer definitive or conclusive evidence to support the use of team building in enhancing or increasing workplace performance. Salas et al. (1999) inclusion criteria eventually yielded a total of 11 studies that were “optimally homogeneous in methodological terms” (p. 318). With the exception of role clarity impacting positively on performance, their results showed an “overall insignificant and negligible effect of team building on performance” (p. 322). A later meta-analysis was undertaken by Klein et al. (2006) examining the relationship between team training and team building activities and their impact on team functioning. Klein et al. (2006) concluded that, overall, the results suggested a positive relationship between team building and improved team functioning.

A meta-analysis approach was also used by Svyantek et al. (1999) to assess the relationship between organisational characteristics and team building success. Svyantek et al. (1999) inclusion criteria stipulated the team building studies must include a combination of goal setting, interpersonal relationships, and problem solving, and be conducted in a business or government setting. Subjects of the meta-analysis included hard rock miners, army team members, air force cadets, MBA students, and manufacturing technicians and managers. Svyantek et al. (1999) study supported their contention that team building positively impacts on workgroup productivity.
2.9 Summary

This chapter has reviewed and discussed several areas pertaining to this research, commencing with the ambiguity of the term team building. This ambiguity is in part due to conceptual and definitional issues, which makes identifying actual organisational benefits difficult. According to the literature reviewed, it appears that organisational benefits are more likely to be gained by incorporation of some or all of the key objectives underpinning team building activities. To that end, interpersonal skills, goal setting, and problem solving were discussed along with support from academics who point to the value of acquiring interpersonal, goal setting and problem solving skills. Greenberg and Baron (2008) noted that the development of interpersonal skills enabled employees to influence each other’s potential upon returning to the workplace. Rosenberg (2007) also noted that the development of interpersonal relationships assists in creating a more productive workplace. Greenberg and Baron (2008) stated that successful performance within the workplace can be enhanced by the setting of goals and Priest and Gass (1997) observed that problem solving is closely linked to decision making and judgment and is a valuable skill in or out of the workplace.

Organisational commitment was discussed as a potential ancillary benefit with several academics supporting the notion that an organisation investing in employee development demonstrates a commitment to their employees which in turn is reciprocated by the employee (Benson, 2006). The use of activities that are metaphorically analogous to the workplace were defined and discussed. This was followed by a discussion regarding the role of an external facilitator. This was followed by a discussion regarding Tuckman’s five stage life cycle model of team development. Finally, a summary of various methodological approaches employed by
team building researchers was discussed with the aim of providing some background for the selection of the methodology for this research, which is covered in the following chapter.

In summary, it would appear from the literature reviewed that team building activities can result in organisational benefits. This literature review has revealed several gaps in extant literature, for example; does age or gender have any impact (positive or negative) on employees engaging in team building. Are metaphoric activities more or less likely to result in benefits being accrued to the organisation, such as the ones discussed in the literature review? As noted at the start of this review, the conceptual and definitional issues that surround team building studies makes this a difficult area at best to research. The main aim of this research is to assess what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building using activities that are analogous to workplace issues, and it may just be possible that the participants themselves may be able to provide some answers to the questions above.
3. Methodology

3.1 Objective and overview

Although research is central to many business and academic processes, there is no consensus of how exactly it should be defined (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar & Newton, 2002; Collis & Hussey, 2003). However, there appears to be agreement that research is a process of enquiry and investigation, is organised and logical, and contributes to extant knowledge (Amaratunga et al., 2002; Collis & Hussey, 2003).

This chapter aims to provide the rationale for the selection of the methodology and the methods used to explore the research question; ‘what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?’

Yin (2003) describes research design as the “logic that links the data to be collected (and conclusions be drawn) to the initial questions of study” (p. 19). In order to ensure a logical research design was selected for this study, research philosophies are defined and discussed, and current research methods and methodologies are explored, along with those employed in similar team building research which were discussed at the end of the literature review. This chapter then discusses the methods of data collection, including the sample selection, questionnaire and personal interview selection and process, and the subsequent analysis techniques employed.
3.2 Research philosophies - positivistic and phenomenological

Broadly speaking, academic research is based on two main philosophies referred to as positivist and phenomenological (MacLean, 2006; Collis & Hussey, 2003). Both of the philosophies provide a framework regarding the methods and techniques for conducting research (Collis & Hussey, 2003). The positivistic paradigm is primarily concerned with an objective, scientific approach to research, employing quantitative methods of data collection typically subject to some form of statistical measurement (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Historically, natural scientists favoured an objective, logical approach which allowed the investigator to remain entirely independent of the research subject, thus avoiding any possibility of personal values or bias to influence subsequent outcomes (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

Following the emergence of social sciences at the end of the nineteenth century, and in the absence of any alternative philosophies at the time, scientists continued employing a positivistic philosophy, arguing that the same laws which apply to natural sciences could equally be applied to the study of human action and behaviour (Collis & Hussey, 2003). However, some researchers criticised positivism, observing that the use of a philosophy which was solely concerned with the physical sciences could not accurately capture human actions and behaviour which are founded on individual perceptions of reality, thus making them inherently subjective (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Hence the emergence of the phenomenological philosophy which tends to be more subjective and humanistic, concerned primarily with the understanding of human behaviour “from the participant’s own frame of reference” (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 53).
Collis and Hussey (2003) note it is best to regard the two main paradigms as “the two extremes of a continuum” (p. 48) and that very few people elect to operate solely within the confines of either. Many academics have described a positivistic approach as quantitative and a phenomenological approach as qualitative, although some academics consider it a fallacy to do so, while others believe that the two can crossover (Budd, 2005; Collis & Hussey, 2003). In order to provide clarity and to avoid misinterpretation of various meanings that are often ascribed to the literary expressions, the terms quantitative and qualitative will be used from this point on, except when referring to researchers that prefer different terminology.

In order to provide not only greater context for the team building studied in this research but to capture the perceptions of the participants, in-depth collection of both quantitative and qualitative data was deemed necessary. This is supported by Rushmer (1997) who makes a pertinent point that utilising statistical methods alone to measure the effectiveness of team building may not be the best approach, noting “the nature of the phenomenon under investigation itself or the circumstances under which data are collected is not amenable to that kind of analysis”. Rushmer (1997) concluded that using a “hard measure of a soft intervention is inappropriate” (p. 316).

Academics such as Collis and Hussey (2003), observe that the research question itself often guides the researcher to the most suitable philosophy, and subsequently the methodology. As noted in the introduction, the research question essentially evolved and was further defined during the process of the initial background research, but was deliberately formulated to be open-ended, whilst still providing a focus on the phenomena of team building. The reason for this was to avoid the possibility of restricting any other lines of enquiry (Collis & Hussey, 2003). In addition to the main research question several sub-questions were also posed, which
rather than constraining the research, delineated the focus of this study. This practice, according to Creswell (1994) and Collis and Hussey (2003), is in line with an overall phenomenological approach.

A case study approach is an example of a phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 1994; Collis and Hussey, 1994; Yin, 2003). Case studies are drawn from real-life situations presenting an in-depth analysis of one setting (Robbins et al 2008). Hartley (1994) observes case studies provide an ideal strategy when one wishes to “understand everyday practices which would not perhaps be revealed in brief contact” (p. 214). Hartley’s (1994) observation is supported by Yin (2003) who notes that, in order to gain an understanding of events, case studies include direct observation of the events and interviews with the participants involved. Including direct observation and personal interview is a feature of case studies and as such they tend to produce data which is more “detailed, varied and extensive” (Neuman, 2000, p. 32). Collis and Hussey (2003) also note the use of a case study is particularly useful when the importance of the context is essential to the overall research.

Although Yin (2003) argues that in general ‘what’ questions can be answered using other research strategies, Collis and Hussey (2003) and Creswell (1994) state that it is entirely appropriate to begin a phenomenological research question with ‘what’ or ‘how’. Yin (2003) does however add that “if the research is concerned with needing to know how or why a programme has worked (or not) a case study is entirely appropriate” (p 7). The ‘how and why’ aspects of this study are particularly important, how were the activities facilitated, how well did the activities link to the design brief. The ‘why’ answers questions such as why/why not did the programme work, did it engage the participants? Did the programme provide opportunities for the design brief objectives to be met?
3.3 Methodological triangulation

Triangulation essentially refers to the use of two or more approaches, methods and techniques of data collection within the same study (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Put simply, methodological triangulation involves using data from multiple sources.

Whilst some academics argue that there are distinct boundaries between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, others believe that there is often a blurring between the two. Yet others question whether they should be considered separate entities at all (Eldabi, Irani, Paul, & Love, 2002). Casell, Buehring, Symon and Johnson (2006) and Collis and Hussey (2003) note that it is entirely possible to conduct qualitative research under a positivistic paradigm. A key point in terms of enhancing one’s research by the use of one or more methods of data collection is made by Cahill (1996) who observes that “qualitative techniques can bring quantitative information to life” (p. 16).

In terms of this research, quantitative data was collected via the use of design briefs and a questionnaire. The questionnaire provided biographical demographics, responses to a set of questions regarding individual perceptions of the team building activities. In addition a small amount of qualitative data was gathered by asking participants to briefly explain their responses to several questions. Additional qualitative data was obtained through observation and personal interviews. These two methods not only provided additional support for the questionnaires and the design briefs, but allowed the researcher to accurately capture and describe the context of this study, thus as noted by Cahill (1996) the quantitative data was brought to life.
3.4 Methodological selection

In summary, given the overall research aim, the need to utilise several methods of data collection in order to describe and discuss the context of this study, and the fact that two distinctly different organisations were involved, a case study approach with mixed methods was deemed to be entirely appropriate and justified. This approach is supported by Yin (2003) who advocates the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to case study development. Finally, a case study approach also allowed for a broad research question to be explored, thus ensuring that the research was not constrained by a very narrow question and therefore perhaps omit possible benefits that may have provided a greater insight into the value of team building activities.

3.5 Case study approach

The nature of this research required that the researcher understand what both organisations expected from the team building activities, specifically the objectives and aims, and this was obtained via the design briefs. Observation of the activities was also necessary in order to provide the context of this research, and to ensure that the researcher would understand any references made to the activities in both the qualitative sections of the questionnaire and the personal interviews. The use of a questionnaire provided not only demographic characteristics but also enabled the researcher to capture contextual data on a larger scale, which would not have been possible unless the researcher had interviewed each participant. The personal interviews provided the opportunity to draw out any assumptions and feelings regarding participation in the team building activities and, as noted by Cahill (1996), to bring the quantitative data to life.
Once a researcher has decided on a case study approach as being the most appropriate method to tackle the research question the next stage is to choose the case study organisation (Hartley, 1994). This study involved two organisations in order to provide contrast, which concurs with Hartley (1994) who urges the researcher to consider the intent of the case study. Does it aim to be typical of the phenomenon under investigation, or would the addition of an extra case provide additional strength to the research and also allow for contrasts to be made?

The researcher decided that, rather than approaching various organisations to see if they intended to engage in team building activities within the following two or three months, a more prudent and expeditious method would be to approach a team building facilitator and work in conjunction with them. This is in line with Hartley’s (1994) recommendation that the researcher be introduced via a third party, rather than cold-calling in order to locate suitable case study organisations. The first step was to make enquiries as to suitably qualified facilitators who would also be willing to assist the researcher. A well-known Auckland-based team building facilitator who is known to the researcher was initially approached for advice and possible recommendations of suitable facilitators. Following that advice the researcher met with the recommended facilitator who fortuitously expressed a willingness to be involved and agreed to contact the researcher should a potentially suitable organisation be identified.

A meeting was then set up between the researcher and the external facilitator to discuss the research criteria and the types of organisations that might be suitable. The suitability of the organisations concurs with Hartley (1994) who notes that, no matter how the case studies are located, it is important that the researcher is clear about what kind of organisation would fit the research criteria.
The case study selection criteria for this study are as follows:

- The objectives must include one or more of the three key objectives (problem-solving, interpersonal skills, goal setting).
- Team building utilising metaphoric team building activities.
- Fully facilitated by a professional and experienced external team building provider.
- A minimum of half a day in duration.

The inclusion of one or more of the three key objectives is based on Wheelan’s (2005) recommendations that activities that include goal setting and interpersonal relationships, combined with feedback regarding participants performance and development, are more likely to produce positive results than those that do not.

Metaphoric activities, as previously noted, are used to reflect and subsequently generate discussion regarding situations or issues that are analogous to the work place such as problem solving, communication and interpersonal skills. The use of an external facilitator was two-fold. One, as noted it was thought to be a more prudent approach to locating suitable organisations for this case study, and secondly Basham, Appleton and Dykeman (2004) recommend using an external facilitator, noting their role is critical in facilitating team building activities.
In order to provide for a sufficient amount of time for participants to engage in several activities it was felt that a minimum of half a day would be required. This choice was supported by the external facilitator who noted that half a day to one full day of team building activities were the most commonly requested. The mix of organisational staff was at the discretion of the organisation, however the participants did represent a reasonable mix of demographics and management levels within each organisation.

Once the case study organisations had been selected and had agreed to participate in this research, the next stage according to Hartley (1994) was to ensure attention was given to maintaining access. This was achieved via email and telephone calls to the managers responsible for training and development to first thank them for allowing access, followed by forwarding the paperwork - questionnaires, personal interview schedules and details of the research - to allow the training and development managers to gain an overall view of the thesis topic and what would be expected from both organisations. This was much appreciated by the managers, and also contributed to establishing a good working relationship with both.

Case studies often rely predominantly on qualitative data, which according to Collis & Hussey (2003) can sometimes be distinguished by low reliability. This was expected, as each of the two groups who participated in the team building activities comprised different organisations, skill levels, gender, ethnicity and age. In addition, each team building intervention was a unique occurrence and therefore could never be replicated exactly. In order to enhance the reliability of this research, a rigorous research design was undertaken, involving trialing both the questionnaire and personal interview questions in order to ensure that the questions were not ambiguous and would produce responses which would provide quality data for this study. Validity was expected to be high, defined as the “extent to which
the research findings accurately represent what is really happening in the situation” (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 357). This is an especially pertinent point in this research, and played a significant role in the selection of a case study approach.

### 3.6 Methods of data collection

The questionnaires were completed by the participants four weeks after completion of the team building activities. The reason for this is supported by a study of a team building programme conducted by Ibbetson and Newell (1998). They noted that post-event responses were “artificially inflated” (p. 253) due to the participants’ extremely positive feelings at the completion of an enjoyable and successful group experience. The phenomenon was also noted in another team building study and was referred to as “post group euphoria” (Marsh, Richards & Barnes, 1986, p. 197).

Following the questionnaires being e-mailed to the participants, the individuals who volunteered for personal interviews were contacted and interviewed. The final two interviews were held with the managers responsible for organising the team building activities. The questions pertained to whether they thought the team building activities were successful in terms of benefits to the organisation including anticipated/unanticipated benefits, disadvantages and/or negative affects.

### Sample selection

As previously noted, the two case study organisations who met the research criteria were initially approached by the facilitator who provided details of the research to create buy-in.
Once the organisations had agreed to participate the researcher provided full details and requirements regarding what would be expected from the organisation and the participants. Of particular interest to the researcher was the fact that both of the case study organisations are well-known New Zealand companies, both employ in excess of 1000 people and are committed to on-going training and development, and it was expected that they would provide a good contrast with one another.

No participant was known personally to the researcher, neither had the researcher had any previous contact with either of the two organisations involved in this research. The researcher was only initially aware of how many participants would be involved, what level the majority of participants occupied within each organisation, details of the design brief, and the duration of the team building activities, all of which met the research criteria.

**Design brief**

The external facilitator discussed the requirements of the team building activities with both of the participating organisations, leading to a design brief being submitted by the external facilitator for approval by the organisations’ managers responsible for training and development. Once the design briefs were accepted, the facilitator (with the researcher present) met with members of the team who would be involved in the facilitation of the activities. This enabled the team to discuss the brief and pinpoint any potential wrinkles in the planning and implementation stages.
Observation

Observation formed one of the data collection methods in this research. Patton (1990) provides support for observational evaluation, noting it allows for a “variety of information from different perspectives to emerge” (p. 59). Senecal, Loughead and Bloom (2008) also support observational evaluation, noting it provides a better understanding of the context in which the team-building activities occurred. Prior to commencing the observational evaluation of the participating organisations, the researcher spent some time observing similar activities (alongside the team-building facilitator used in the case studies) in order to gain further insight into activities that were similar to those proposed for the two organisations involved in this study, and to guide the development of both the questionnaire and the semi-structured personal interview questions that were to be used during the actual case studies.

The researcher was present for both of the organisations’ team building activities and was introduced to both groups. The researcher then briefly re-iterated the purpose of the research and emphasised that the researcher was present only to observe the activities in order to provide background information for the study and to enable the researcher to appreciate comments made in the questionnaires and personal interviews regarding references to particular activities.

In addition the participants were informed that no notes would be taken during the observation period. The reason for this was the researcher did not want the participants to feel they were being observed as laboratory rats which may have made some participants very uncomfortable. It was also hoped that this might lessen the possibility of social desirability bias, which in essence pertains to individuals exhibiting behaviour that they perceive to be
more socially desirable or acceptable (Greenberg & Baron, 2008.). The researcher instead made brief notes on the activities away from the groups during tea and lunch breaks.

**Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire instrument was developed by the researcher and was based on the research question as well as key points uncovered in the team building literature. The questionnaire included four areas in which the participants were invited to make brief comments expanding on particular questions, thus providing qualitative information that may not have been gathered without interviewing each individual. The questionnaire document was designed by the researcher with the aid of Microsoft Word. The final copy was formatted by an external agency in order to ensure a professional appearance.

The three questions regarding different levels of organisational commitment were based on the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al (1979). The completed questionnaire was then trialled amongst a mixed group of individuals (10) known to the researcher to ensure there were no ambiguous or non-relevant questions in the final copy.

The questionnaire predominantly used a 5 point Likert scale method (1: strongly agree, 2 agree, 3: neither agree nor disagree 4: disagree, 5: strongly disagree). The use of this scale is supported by Roland, Wagner and Weigand (1995) who state that Likert scale questionnaires are the most commonly used as they are “quantifiable and subject to easy interpretation” (p.123). Utilising a 5 point scale rather than a 7 point scale was due to the fact that the researcher believed it would unnecessarily complicate completing the questionnaire as the two
additional options would be asking similar questions and their subsequent omission would not negatively impact on the final analysis.

Qualitative comments were also sought in response to five questions and additional space was provided where appropriate on the questionnaire. The gathering of additional information in this manner is supported by Roland et al. (1995) who state it is helpful in further interpretation of data from a questionnaire.

The questionnaire began with brief instructions, including the choice of returning the questionnaire via electronic mail (e-mail) or by post. The first section pertained to the participants’ demographics; gender, age, highest academic qualification, length of tenure. This information was required in order to frame participants’ responses. Lee (1999) recommends the demographic section being placed at the beginning of the questionnaire in order to ease participants into the questionnaire. The inclusion of demographics concurs with Becker (1992) who noted the importance of including demographic variables as prior research has tied them to the “phenomena of commitment” (p. 238).

Section two began with questions that were designed to elicit general views on the team building activities including levels of motivation, job performance and perceptions of how the team building impacted on the workplace. The following section involved questions regarding communication, trust and understanding of colleagues. Section four was concerned with commitment to the organisation, and section five asked questions relating to goal setting. The final section focused on problem solving, and then asked three questions requiring brief written responses, regarding perceived benefits resulting from the team building activities,
what their initial thoughts were when told of the upcoming team building activities, and whether or not their views had altered as a result of participation in the activities.

**Personal interviews**

As the sample population was relatively small, it was decided that three personal interviews in addition to the training and development manager from each organisation would provide sufficient contextual data and be representative of the overall participant population. At the completion of the team building activities the researcher thanked all the participants for allowing the researcher to observe the activities. Following this, and with the researcher absent, the facilitator asked if any participants would like to volunteer for personal interviews to be conducted four weeks after the team building at a time that was mutually suitable.

Several individuals from each case study organisation completed personal interview consent forms. As the facilitator was not aware of the number of personal interviews required when the completed forms were collected, the facilitator notified the participants that forms would be randomly selected and those individuals selected would be contacted within three weeks in order to organise suitable times for interviewing the following week. The facilitator also thanked all those who had agreed to interviews on behalf of the researcher. As it was a random selection, of the eight participants (including the two training and development managers who had organised the team building activities) five were Auckland based, one was in the Bay of Plenty and two were from Palmerston North.
Due to financial and temporal constraints, several factors needed to be considered. As the researcher is Auckland based, and given the possibility that there may have been last minute cancellations/postponements either by the participant or the airlines, it was decided to interview participants outside of Auckland via telephone. Although this is not ideal, as face-to-face interviews may have provided perhaps a little more information in terms of facial expressions, a compromise needed to be made with regards to the above considerations.

When the interview phase of this research commenced, only one participant was unavailable from FizzCo. As FizzCo had 21 participants, it was felt that three interviews in total would be sufficiently representative in the final analysis, thus a fourth interviewee was not sought.

**Questionnaire data collection process**

The original method called for questionnaires to be delivered to the workplace and collected by the researcher one month after the completion of the team building activities. However both organisations expressed a preference for questionnaires to be emailed, allowing the participants to reply in their own time but before the due date, rather than being under pressure to complete whilst the researcher was present. The researcher was more than happy with this arrangement. As already noted, one of the organisations is based in Palmerston North and the researcher is Auckland based, and the time and cost incurred would have been prohibitive.

The questionnaires were emailed via a third party computer using a third party address, and two return options were given on the first page of the questionnaire - email or post. The questionnaires received via the third party email were stripped of identifying features such as
the respondents’ email address, and were then printed and passed to the researcher. The one questionnaire received via post was given to the researcher after being checked by a third party to ensure there were no identifying features, such as a personal note or return address included and this was then passed onto the researcher.

Each of the questionnaires was allocated a number and either an A or B corresponding to which of the two organisations the questionnaire was received from, and a number corresponding to the order they were received by the third party email receiver. The questionnaires were then passed to the researcher. The questionnaires were then entered into two separate Excel files labelled A and B. Each file comprised three sheets, one for demographics, the second for the Likert scale responses, and the third sheet for the qualitative replies. The allocation of numbers was used as an identifying feature when comparing data, and also in referencing any comments in the thesis, for example; “Participant 4 from Org A noted…”.

**Interview data collection process**

A covering letter was given to each of the participants prior to commencing the interview. Details included how any information provided would be kept confidential, and an assurance that neither the individual nor their organisation would be identified in this research.

Lee (2000) notes, that as there is almost always an unequal power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, the means by which the interviewer frames the interview becomes critical to its success. Following Lee’s (2000) recommendations, the researcher began by thanking and acknowledging the participants’ contribution to this study, followed by an overview of the interview agenda. The approximate length of the interview and the fact that it
would be taped and transcribed was discussed, along with the broad questions likely to be addressed. The researcher then re-iterated the research question, the broad aim of the research, and that a few minutes would be allocated to summarising the interview which would allow the participant to add anything that may have come to mind over the course of the interview. This was followed by reminding the participants that they were able to withdraw from the study for any reason by emailing the researcher within two weeks of the interview taking place.

Participants were also advised that they were able to request a final summary report by emailing the researcher with ‘final summary report’ as the subject title. Finally, the participants were asked to sign a consent form acknowledging they had had all relevant information communicated to them and that they were happy to be interviewed. An unsigned copy was also left with each interviewee with the researchers’ email details.

The personal interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format which, as previously mentioned, had been trialled prior to the interviews to ensure that the design would elicit relevant data and that the questions were not ambiguous. Furthermore, the semi-structured nature of the questions allowed the researcher some flexibility. Whilst the interviews were being recorded the researcher also took notes by hand, which aided in guiding the interview, and also allowed the researcher to return to various themes that were mentioned, or to ask the participant to clarify or elaborate on certain points being discussed.

Two interview schedules (Appendices B & C) were used, enabling the researcher to ask the participants relevant questions. The second one was used to obtain different data from the training and development managers including such questions as why they chose to engage in
team building and their observations of the team building activities from an organisational viewpoint.

**Data analysis - questionnaires**

The demographics were put into a graph format in order to provide an overall visual picture of the participants. Each of the Likert scale sections were converted to a percentage point and shown in bar graphs, once again to allow for a visual representation and straightforward interpretation of the figures. The charts were all accompanied with supporting text. The qualitative objectives of the questionnaire data were entered in to Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and subsequently analysed for common or emerging themes which were then ranked and placed in the results chapter following the appropriate question.

A cross-case analysis was also undertaken in order to show any significant similarities and/or differences. Comparisons of the similarities and differences using the questionnaire responses of strongly agree and agree were then shown in a horizontal bar chart in order to provide a visual aide to the accompanying text.

**Data analysis - interviews**

Interview data was analysed for emerging or interesting themes and as each theme was identified, general classifications or “broad categories of themes” (Ammeter & Dukerich, 2002, p. 4) were established. Each of the category lists contained three or four themes, reflecting common ideas or issues raised by the interviewees. A list was then compiled with each of the themes being graded, based on how many other interviewees mentioned the same
themes. The main themes then became clear and the list was reduced to a key theme list. The percentage of participants making comments related to each theme, along with examples, is provided in the discussion section.

3.7 Limitations

The questionnaire employed a forced choice method which is an acknowledged limitation of the questionnaire. The researcher also acknowledges that there is always likely to be a trade-off in the gathering of data. In order to ensure sufficient data was collected to enable a meaningful analysis, the researcher decided against including a not-applicable option in the questionnaire, thereby avoiding the possibility of nil responses. It is possible therefore that some of the responses indicated as neither agree nor disagree could have been used as a proxy for a not-applicable choice. Secondly, the phrasing of the questions/statements in some sections may have unintentionally steered some participants towards recording a more favourable response which is acknowledged as another limitation to this study. Finally, there may have been an element of social desirability bias in the personal interviews. This may have also affected the way the participants acted during the observations.

3.8 Ethical implications

In accordance with Unitec guidelines regarding ethical research, all steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the organisations involved was maintained. Both case study organisations’ training and development managers were asked to sign consent forms on behalf their organisations noting that they had had all details and
requirements of the research clearly explained to them and were happy to participate in this research.

Precautions taken to ensure the participants’ and organisations’ confidentiality and anonymity were preserved include the interview data being presented in a manner that would not potentially lead to any embarrassing information being revealed. Participation in the interviews was voluntary and all interview participants had the nature of the research fully explained to them and were then asked to consent and sign the interview schedule prior to the interviews commencing. Interview participants were also reminded that they could withdraw from the research within two weeks of the interview taking place by simply emailing the researcher and typing ‘withdraw’ as the subject line. The organisations themselves were referred to as DiggerCo and FizzCo.

The questionnaires were anonymous and received via a third-party email address completely stripped of any identifying features, and additionally respondents were given the choice of returning the questionnaires via New Zealand Post. The final summary report that will be sent to both organisations upon full completion of this thesis will be completely anonymised, ensuring that any features that would directly or indirectly identify the participants or the organisations are removed.

3.9 Summary

This section has outlined the methodology chosen for this study, followed by details regarding a case study approach and why this methodology was deemed to be appropriate and justified for this research. Details regarding how the various methods of data would be collected and
analysed were also discussed. The precautions taken to ensure that both the participants’ and the organisations’ confidentiality and anonymity were assured were detailed. Finally the limitations of this research were acknowledged.

The next chapter discusses the results of this research. Key themes are revealed and discussed leading to a summary of the research question, which to reiterate is; “What if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?”
4. Results

4.1 Objective and outline

This chapter begins by describing the background to DiggerCo and a brief synopsis of the activities. The questionnaire results are then presented, followed by the personal interviews which have been summarised. The same process is then applied to FizzCo.

A cross-case analysis is then shown in graph form, followed by a discussion regarding the key similarities and differences between the two organisations. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the key findings which are then further discussed in the next chapter.

4.2 DiggerCo - Background

Case study A is a well established, privately owned, large national company involved in road construction with approximately 1000 employees. The majority of employees within this company are male, due to the nature of the business, and this is reflected in the 100% male response rate. One female employee did participate in the team building but did not return a questionnaire. 25 of the 51 participants completed questionnaires. 48% of the participants were between 26-35 years of age, 32% were aged 36-45 and 20% were 46+ years of age. None were aged 18-25 years as an upcoming team building programme is being planned for the ‘under 25 group’ as part of the company’s three year rotation of training and development programmes.
The majority of participants were employed in middle management (84%). 12% were senior managers and 4% were non-management. The length of tenure was varied, 36% had been with the organisation one year or less, 24% between one and three years, 20% had been employed for more than seven years and 16% had been with the company between three and five years. The balance of 4% had worked for the company for between five and seven years. Most of the managers hold a polytechnic qualification relevant to their industry.

The 51 participants were mainly project managers who usually work independently of each other managing their own teams in branches around New Zealand. The two day programme stems from the company’s investment in a three year rotation plan, whereby similar work groups are bought together every three years in order to provide additional training and personal development opportunities.

The design brief provided by the national training manager was to provide opportunities for the participants to work alongside one another and acknowledge the different perspectives and skills that each participant brings to the organisation, in essence to step outside of their usual role of ‘boss’. The importance of team work was to be reinforced, and the activities also needed to embrace the company’s values and ‘clean, green team’ theme. The overall programme also needed to incorporate an element of fun. The facilitator designed a programme with activities that would reflect the competitive nature of the industry, encourage team work and be enjoyable.

The team building activities took place in Palmerston North at an indoor equestrian centre. The project managers were together for two days as part of a training programme. Initially ice breaker activities were used to introduce participants and to assist in building rapport with one
another, in addition to being used as an opportunity to create buy-in for the following team building activities. The activities included a twist on the game of ‘tag’ whereby each member once tagged had to link arms with the ‘tagger’ until there were two large groups with linked arms trying to tag members of the opposite group. The second activity involved a twist on ‘paper, scissors, rock’ and ‘rats and rabbits’. The participants were split into two teams and rather than the traditional paper, rock or scissors, they were instead given ‘wizard, elves and ogres’ as options and these words were to be combined with appropriate actions. Each team retired to their home base and discussed which term they would use. They then faced off with the opposing team and on the count of three the teams simultaneously called out the word and the action. The winning word/action team then chased the losing team back to their respective home base, those that were tagged then joined the opposing team.

Once the participants had completed these ice breaker activities the participants were split into ten teams, asked to select a captain, choose a team name and then pick up a set of bandanas to be worn for the day to identify the team members. Once the teams had been formed, each team was asked to choose three values that reflected the company’s values and would be a key to the team’s overall success. The five teams were then asked to share and explain the reasoning behind their selection of the three words, which resulted in plenty of laughter and an eagerness to commence the day’s activities.

The activities were based on a ‘fun pentathlon’ incorporating problem-solving and interpersonal skill based activities involving working together on large sleds in a relay, an unusual twist on the traditional sack relays, relay races, rubber fish throwing (which inspired a lot of laughter), a four way tug-o-war. The final activity involved building large slingshots and then testing their efficiency by engaging in a competition to see which team could score a
bullseye on the target that had been set up some distance from the teams. Each of the activities was introduced by the facilitator who then elicited feedback upon completion regarding the relationships between the activity and their workplace. At the conclusion of the activities, the project managers adjoined to a nearby restaurant where photos of the day’s events were shown on a projector screen leading to good natured, but long and detailed descriptions of where teams had gone wrong, and what could have been done differently.

4.3 DiggerCo - Questionnaire results

To provide additional clarity, the actual number of respondents with the percentage is shown in brackets in the key to each graph. The questionnaires invited participants to briefly elaborate on five questions, which were subsequently analysed for recurring, emerging or interesting themes. The key themes were ranked according to the number of times they were mentioned by the participants, which are listed in order of the questionnaire number along with the actual question (where applicable).

Section 2 - Overall views:

Q 1. Overall I enjoyed participating in the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>9 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>15 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the design brief objectives for this organisation was to ensure that the activities included an element of fun. These figures show the team building activities were well received, with 60% of the participants agreeing they had enjoyed the activities and 38% noting they strongly agreed they enjoyed the activities.

Q 1. Qualitative comments

Please briefly explain your response to the above question.

1. Having fun (7)
2. Getting to know others in the business (6).
3. NIL comments (6)
4. Generally positive comments (5)
5. Competitive aspect - activities related to real world/workplace (1)
Total replies: 25

Q 2. Overall the team building activities were worthwhile to me personally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question two shows an almost even split between those who thought they had been worthwhile personally (40%) and those that neither agreed or disagreed (44%).
Q 3. I feel my workplace environment is more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.

Strongly Agree: 2 (8%)
Agree: 8 (32%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 13 (52%)
Disagree: 2 (8%)
Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

This is not a surprising outcome, as the majority of participants work independently of one another and it was not one of the stated objectives of the team building activities.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that 10 of the 25 participants either agreed or strongly agreed that their workplace was more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.

Q 4. I feel more motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

Strongly Agree: 0 (0%)
Agree: 3 (12%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 17 (68%)
Disagree: 5 (20%)
Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

Motivation was not one of the overall aims or objectives of the design brief, so not an altogether unexpected response. The five participant responses who disagreed are further explored in the discussion chapter.
Q 5. I feel more de-motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This statement was included in order to see if participants actually felt more de-motivated as a result of the team building activities. There were several reasons for asking this. Firstly, some individuals may have felt that it was not at all worthwhile, and consequently perhaps a waste of theirs and the organisation’s time. Secondly, some participants may have felt de-motivated due to participation in the activities themselves, due to being put ‘on the spot’ in front of colleagues, or in a situation in which they did not feel entirely comfortable. However, in analysing the agree and strongly agree replies, it appears possible that the question was misinterpreted, as the following responses by those individuals to other questions regarding the team building were positive. Overall, it appears that the majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the question.
Q 6. The team building activities will help improve my job performance now and in the future.

- Strongly Agree: 1 (4%)
- Agree: 3 (12%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree: 17 (68%)
- Disagree: 3 (12%)
- Strongly Disagree: 1 (4%)

These figures are also not entirely unexpected, as improving or enhancing the participants' overall job performance was not a specific aim of the design brief.

Q 7. Overall, I feel that the team building activities had a positive impact on my workplace as a whole.

- Strongly Agree: 2 (8%)
- Agree: 17 (68%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree: 5 (20%)
- Disagree: 1 (4%)
- Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

This question elicited an entirely unexpected response. Question 3 asked whether they thought their workplace was more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities. The above question asked a similar question, and yet gained considerable support, with 76% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.
Q 8. Qualitative comments

Thinking about the team building activities, what in your opinion was particularly beneficial in terms of improving your overall workplace performance?

1. Getting to know colleagues (7)
2. Increasing/enhancing communication/interpersonal skills (5)
3. Breaking down barriers between various levels in the business (4)
4. NIL responses (4)
5. Competitive aspect (3)
6. Other comments (1)
7. No benefit (1)

Total replies: 25

Summary of questions 1-8:

Questions 1-8 were designed to gather overall perceptions of the team building activities and on the whole are positive, a conclusion that is also supported by the qualitative comments noted above. The one ‘other’ comment was “everyone has the same problems”.

66
Section 3 - Interpersonal relationships:

Q 9. I feel that I am better able to communicate with other members of my team as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree:</th>
<th>4 (16%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>15 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providing the opportunity for the participants to get together was one of the objectives and the positive responses to this question point to this objective being met.

Q 10. Compared with before the team building activities, my level of trust and confidence in my colleagues has increased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree:</th>
<th>1 (4%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>11 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As many of the participants do not work together, these figures are perhaps to be expected. What is of interest however, is that 48% agreed that their level of trust and confidence had increased, with only 4% noting that they disagreed.
Q 11. I feel that I better understand my colleagues as a result of the team building activities.

Strongly Agree: 1 (4%)
Agree: 18 (72%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 5 (20%)
Disagree: 0 (0%)
Strongly Disagree: 1 (4%)

One of the design brief objectives was to provide an opportunity for the participants to get to know one another. These results indicate this objective was met, producing a 72% positive agree response, with only a small percentage neither agreeing or disagreeing (5%) and only 1% strongly disagreeing.

Section 3: Questions 9-11 summary:

This section was primarily concerned with interpersonal relationships that were part of the design brief, and overall the responses are positive, indicating that the activities contributed to increasing or enhancing interpersonal relationships amongst the participants.
Section 4: Organisation commitment

Q 12. As a result of the team building activities I feel more committed to the organisation and I am less likely to leave in the near future.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an interesting result, although there is near even split between the agree and neither agree nor disagree, the fact that 44% agreed does tend to support much of the existing literature on organisational commitment and is further discussed in the following chapter.

Q 13. As a result of the team building activities I feel better about the organisation and am more likely to talk positively about it outside of my workplace.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question supports question number 12 and shows a significant (68%) proportion of the respondents agreeing with the statement.
Q 14. As a result of the team building activities I now feel like a ‘part of the family’ in my organisation.

Strongly Agree: 1 (4%)
Agree: 17 (68%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 5 (20%)
Disagree: 1 (4%)
Strongly Agree: 1 (4%)

This was one of the key objectives of the team building activities, and a significant proportion (72%) of the participants agreed that they now feel like part of the family within the organisation.

Section 4 - Questions 12-13 summary:

This section was based on aspects contributing to organisational commitment and the results tend to support research in this field which is discussed in more depth in the following chapter.
Section 5 - Goal setting:

Q 15. I feel the team building activities motivated me to set goals that will assist me in my workplace performance.

- Strongly Agree: 0 (0%)
- Agree: 8 (32%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree: 12 (48%)
- Disagree: 3 (12%)
- Strongly Disagree: 2 (8%)

Goal setting was not included in the design brief for this organisation, thus the responses are not entirely unexpected. However, the fact that 32% agreed, as opposed to a combined total of 20% that either disagreed/strongly disagreed, is nevertheless an interesting finding.

Q 16. I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities.

- Strongly Agree: 0 (0%)
- Agree: 7 (28%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree: 14 (56%)
- Disagree: 2 (8%)
- Strongly Disagree: 2 (8%)

This question was included in order to provide additional backup support for question 15 and resulted in a similar response.
Q 17. Compared with before the team building activities, my workplace has become more productive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increasing productivity in the workplace was not one of the aims of the organisations design brief and as a result these figures are not unexpected.

Section 5 - Questions 15-17 summary:

Section five was concerned with goal setting and motivation and, as noted, goal setting was not a part of the design brief. However there are some interesting findings in this section which are elaborated on in the discussion chapter.
Section 6 - Problem solving:

Q 18. I am better able to identify and evaluate problems in my job as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section was concerned with problem solving and, whilst not resulting in a marked increase, the following question showed a slightly different result which is interesting.

Q 19. I am better equipped to implement and resolve solutions to problems in my workplace as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question asked about implementation and resolution of problems, resulting in a higher level of ‘agree’ responses than the previous question. These two questions are further discussed in the following chapter.
Q 20. Overall, do you feel that the team building activities have been beneficial to your organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a particularly interesting finding as it relates directly the research question. 80% felt that the team building activities were beneficial to their organisation and this result is further discussed in the following chapter.

Q 21. Qualitative themes from questionnaire

Please briefly explain your response to question 21.

1. Increased interpersonal relationships (16)
2. Nil response (5)
3. Identifying potential leaders (3)
4. Other (1)

Total replies: 25
Q 22. Qualitative comments

Please describe your initial reaction when you first heard that you would be participating in team building activities.

1. No interest/negative reaction (14)
2. Looking forward to the team building activities (11)

Total replies: 25

Q 23. Qualitative comments

Referring to question 22, has your attitude towards team building activities changed? Please briefly explain your response.

1. No (7)
2. Yes (16)
3. Nil response (1)
4. Neutral (1)

Total replies: 25

Summary of questions 18-23:

This section was concerned with problem solving skills and organisational benefits. In addition, participants were also asked to comment on their thoughts regarding participating in the team building activities before and after completion. All of the areas generated significant positive data, which is further explored in the discussion section.
The first question pertained to the participants’ overall thoughts on the team building activities. The first interviewee noted that teams that work together on a day-to-day basis would be more likely to benefit from team building activities such as the ones included in this study, but noted that “the presentation was really good, and I think that was really beneficial…it turned something relatively simple into fun, by that I mean it did not require many props”. The interviewee then went on to say that one of the main benefits of the team building activities was the opportunity to observe how others worked and interacted with each other, noting; “We work in a competitive industry and remaining competitive is really important as that’s how we win our contracts. People that are successful are those that are competitive, those that are not need more input into their daily performance to keep them motivated. I was very interested from a personal perspective to see what the various styles were and how they played out during the day”.

The second interviewee’s overall views of the team building activities pertained to the competitive element, stating; “it was quite strange that, as the activities went on, it got more and more competitive as the various personalities began to emerge and that was what made it very interesting to me personally”. The third participant to be interviewed made similar comments in response to the opening question, noting; I think that the competitive stuff is really good, what I mean is, it encouraged us to bond, gel as a team”.

In terms of benefiting personally from the team building activities, one commented; “It was worthwhile to me personally, if only to get the old brain working and thinking about different ways of achieving the tasks at hand”. The second participant said; “Yes, quite positive, I think
the biggest was challenging myself”. The third interviewee referred back to an earlier comment regarding observing how others work, saying; “I think that some of the activities were more beneficial than others, the sleds were interesting both as a participant and an observer, and it goes back to what I said earlier about observing how others work. When the pressure went on, some just froze…well in my group they did, and just when you think they are going to do one thing, they do the exact opposite. I was in the red team, and the guy in the lead wanted to do his own thing, we suffered from a severe lack of communication which cost us the game…which is not what we had initially agreed on prior to the start of the activity and that lead to some serious frustration, then the guy at the front finally started yelling ‘left, right, left’ which is what we had agreed on in the master plan, but by then it was too late and we ended up second to last”.

In response to the question pertaining to what, if any, benefits accrued to the organisation as a result of the team building activities, one of the interviewees pointed to the value of instilling a sense of family as being of benefit to the organisation, noting; “I think overall, it's about building pride in the company…I do think therefore that there was value in the team building, in bringing us together…as the company grows ever larger and people come and go, it is important to keep us thinking like a team”. The second interviewee noted “There probably will be benefits but I think they may be quite subtle…I believe that from observing and working with others, you may spot something that could benefit us all. The third manager made a similar observation, saying; “The real benefit to the organisation from my perspective is seeing how others fit into broad categories…that information is quite useful as it allows one to identify certain personalities that you would be able to build on, assist in weaker areas possibly, and also who you may prefer to work with, you know…those that are on the same level”.

77
The participants were also asked whether they thought communication between themselves and their colleagues had changed as a result of the team building activities. The first participant noted; “Due to my limited contact with my colleagues, it was great. It was good to open up lines of communication, especially with those that I had not met, and can now phone and chat, rather than emailing them”. The second participant echoed those of the first interviewee, adding; “I think that the activities made it a little easier to communicate, you know it was a bit more relaxed, it wasn’t all about work related matters, it was fun so therefore it was probably easier to start a conversation…It did allow the opening of communication channels easier because you were having fun rather than in a work situation”. The third participant’s comments also related to opening communication channels therefore making it easier to strike up a conversation.

The participants were also asked whether there was any change in interpersonal relationships as a result of the team building activities. The first participant pointed to the value of being able to put a name to a face, noting; One of the guys in the organisation who was in my team on the day, I have known him for years, but I am not good with names and faces, now we have participated in something together that encouraged the use of names…you know in cheering on your team mates, well through that interaction I also got to know someone else and I will definitely not forget either of them now, it’s now instant recall, even pick up the phone now and chat…actually its great”.

The second participant thought that the value was in observing different personalities that were involved, noting the team building activities provided “several eye opening moments”. The researcher then asked the interviewee to explain what was meant by eye opening moments, the interviewee said; “Well… as I said, the leader in our team, well look to be
honest if I was looking for a leader for a team project, given the poor way he led us...I would be seriously considering someone else, in fact I was really surprised looking around at how some of the guys I interact with on a daily basis were taking total control, and some of the seniors were standing back, whilst the younger new guys were giving orders, yep as I said eye-opening, but very valuable”. The interviewee then went on to say that such observations are beneficial to the organisation in terms of looking at the underlying reasons for the team building and how others react to situations. In this case it was a competitive race and, as they work in a competitive industry, reactions under pressure are important. The interviewee also noted that had the questions been put to him immediately following the activities; I probably would not have even thought of that, I mean stepping back and having time to reflect was also beneficial, having time to really look at the underlying stuff”.

In terms of increased or enhanced commitment to the organisation, the first participant responded; “The organisation is very family orientated and I would like to say that I think it’s great that the company does this across all levels and at some level we are all the part of the bigger group which I think is key”. The second participant noted; “Overall, it did provide an opportunity for valuable insights into how people work, communicate and get on with one another, a really important part of our business overall, so yes I do see benefits to the organisation”. The third participant had this to say; No, not really, I am committed to the organisation and am happy in my work, I think it’s great that they do include this sort of stuff in the development programmes across the board, as I think there are real benefits in getting to know your colleagues in a more relaxed but stimulating environment and as I said earlier, opening communication channels, working together on activities that required some thinking about the end result and so on was overall beneficial to our organisation”.
The participants’ views on the overall facilitation of the team building activities resulted in all three interviewees agreeing that the facilitator was very good. Comments included; *I don’t think it would have been successful if it was boring, he put fun into it, he was charismatic, but at the same time assertive, and that’s what a group like ours needed*, “I think the idea of showing the pictures on the slide show that night was great, kept the buzz going. The facilitator himself was quite innovative I thought, a very enthusiastic organiser and that makes a real difference”.

The participants were asked at the conclusion of the interview if there was anything further they would like to add. One of the participants summed up the value of team building from a personal perspective saying; “I think the concept of having a group of people together and having some organised activities creates an atmosphere that allows for people to be a bit more natural or open, they are not threatened by their lack of either knowledge or experience in their job situation., a level playing field is established. You are completely removed from pressures of work, so you are more relaxed, this allows different facets of personalities to emerge and that’s what I find more interesting than anything else, is what comes out of people, what you actually see”. The other two managers referred to the duration of the team building being a bit too brief, however both noted that timing is always an issue in terms of having so many senior managers away from their work for two days.

The final interview was undertaken with the training manager, and followed a slightly different format in terms of the questions asked. The first question pertained to the training manager’s overall observations regarding the team building activities. The training manager felt that overall the participants had all enjoyed themselves and the activities were well suited to the client group. The key to a successful day was the energy the facilitator brought to the
activities, ensuring that everyone remained fully engaged. The training manager was then asked to summarise the overall purpose of the team building activities. Re-iterating the design brief objectives, the manager said; “Get the guys out of the conference room and stimulate them. I wanted them put in a position of having to listen to and work with other people instead of being the ‘boss’, by that I mean getting a different perspective of each other. I also wanted our clean green team theme reinforced and our company values…and, as I said, the activities also needed to be fun”.

Organisational development according to the literature is concerned with improving organisational effectiveness and overall employee well-being. The researcher asked the training manager what his thoughts were about this relationship and using team building activities. The training manager felt that incorporating team building into the overall management programme certainly provided the opportunities for the participants to learn more about each other in a relaxed forum, which was one of the key objectives.

In terms of benefits to the organisation, the training manager had this to say; “The real benefits in my opinion are as I said, putting the guys in a situation where they had to work with and listen to one another. It’s about gaining fresh ideas and extending their knowledge base about the importance of teams, you know understanding the complex nature of teams - they are all different and they all bring different skills. The activities really got them thinking outside of the box, and how they work together. All of this contributes to learning about what makes a good team, which is very beneficial to our organisation”. Another benefit according to the training manager was that the activities were something they don’t normally do and because they were creative and well facilitated, the overall objectives were able to be met due to the fact that; “Because much of the usual team building stuff has been done to death, it’s
important that we find things that are new, fresh and creative, while still meeting the objectives of the overall programme. In addition, we need someone who understands what our requirements are and is able to design a programme that will meet those requirements”.

In terms of any ancillary benefits resulting from participation in the team building activities, the training manager commented; “The feedback from some of the lads was interesting, especially comments that pertained to how others worked under pressure, actually, how some didn’t perform so well, so its something we can look at. I guess it could be included as an ancillary benefit by virtue of the fact that it was planned for, and at the end of the day, it is good for us to be able to identify the good and the bad”.

The researcher asked the training manager whether or not they would use team building activities again as part of the organisation’s overall training and development plan, the answer was a definitive “Yes”. The training manager also commented on the value of using an external facilitator saying; “I work with these guys everyday and while I could probably do them myself, I wouldn’t. The facilitator was full of energy and ‘over the top’. If I had got up and done that, I would have just looked foolish. I would not have got the same buy-in as he did. As I said, I travel regularly and have interviewed several facilitators over the years. I chose this one because of the energy and creativity he brings to the activities, he gets the guys engaged quickly, and we will definitely continue to work with him”.
Case summary

The overall views expressed by the participants in both the questionnaires and the personal interviews point to one overarching organisational benefit being accrued as a result of the team building activities, that of interpersonal relationships, especially increasing/enhancing of communication skills. In terms of the activities themselves, the majority of the participants agreed that they had enjoyed themselves, furthermore by incorporating an element of competitiveness the participants were better able to relate to the activities. While the majority of participants did not think their level of commitment to the organisation had altered, most felt more like a part of the family and they were also more likely to speak positively outside of their workplace which is an encouraging result for organisation A. The overall findings for DiggerCo are discussed in more depth in the findings and analysis chapter.

4.5 FizzCo - Background

Case study B is a high profile international organisation with approximately 1000 employees involved in manufacturing and marketing an instantly recognisable branded product. The programme was run over two days with the main aim of launching the 2008 twelve month in-house high performance leadership programme. There were 21 participants at various levels of management and few had met in person. The participants are viewed by their organisation as future leaders within the business. Of the 17 who returned questionnaires, 65% are in management roles currently, 6% are senior managers, and 29% occupied non-management positions. 53% of the participants were male and 47% female. The length of tenure varied, the majority had been employed by the company for between one and three years, 23% had been with the company between five and seven years, 12% had been with the company between
three and five years, with the same figure employed for less than one year. The remaining 6% had been with the company for more than seven years.

The design brief for the team building facilitator was to incorporate activities that would reinforce the Johari’s Window model developed by Luft and Ingram (Robbins et al., 2008), upon which the two day programme was largely based. In addition, the organisation’s core values of innovation, passion, excellence, people, customer and citizenship, neatly summarised under the umbrella of ‘refreshingly kiwi’ were to be reflected in the activities. The facilitator decided on a decidedly ‘kiwiana’ theme.

The team building activities took place at a hotel resort located an hour south of Auckland. Once all the participants had arrived, the morning commenced with four ice breaker activities. Each of the ice breaker activities was deliberately chosen to begin the process of introducing the Johari’s Window concepts to the participants. Activities were used as a metaphor for the four areas in the model, encouraging personal disclosure and involved activities that included such things as birthplace, position in organisation, favourite pastime and cartoon character and destination of dream holiday. At the end of the three activities each participant was able to clearly and without prompting recall numerous details about their colleagues. This ice breaker period was completed by participation in the Yurt circle, which involves all participants holding a rope in a taut circle enabling willing individuals to climb up on top of the rope and walk around the circle. This activity provided a strong metaphor for the value of everyone working together and instantly sparked a discussion about ‘team work’.

The catapult activity was the first activity to solicit feedback in a structured manner. The participants were required to build a catapult with each team given photos taken at odd angles
of various parts of a completed catapult. The photo angles made it quite difficult to work out what parts they were viewing. In addition each team was given five photos placed face down that they could choose to turn over for a period of 30 seconds at a time or turn simultaneously but within the same time limit. Prior to commencing this activity each participant had been asked to pick a colleague’s name out of a hat and this was to become their ‘secret buddy’. The facilitator stressed that this activity was not so much about the task, but rather the outcome was more important as this would lead to valuable personal observations and feedback being acquired. At the end of the activity each of the participants found their secret buddy and spent some time discussing the observations they had made and giving and receiving feedback. This was followed by taking some time alone to reflect and fill in the personal diaries they were required to keep for the duration of the programme.

Most of the activities were undertaken outdoors (due to fine weather). The final activity for the day involved a ‘great kiwi bar-b-que cook off’. This activity involved teams of four working together to first design and then present their menu to the head chef (facilitator) and the other teams. Each menu must have included every ingredient that had been previously placed on their table. The teams then had fifty minutes to cook and present their three-course meals. While the participants sat down to their meals, they were treated to a summary of the day’s events via a slide show. Day two began with four teams building trolleys for the inaugural ‘pimp my trolley’ derby. Following the conclusion of the race, the winners were crowned, and all participants departed the venue.
4.6  FizzCo - Questionnaire results

Section 2 - Overall views:

Q 1. Overall I enjoyed participating in the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>12 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organisation’s design brief for the team building activities was quite specific, and one of the final objectives was to include an element of fun. 17 out of a total of 21 participants in the team building activities responded to the questionnaire, and 16 of the 17 clearly enjoyed the activities.

Q 1. Qualitative comments

Please briefly explain your responses to question 1.

1. Meeting other colleagues (7)
2. Programme was well facilitated and enjoyable (8)
3. Nil response (2)

Total replies: 17
Q 2. Overall the team building activities were worthwhile to me personally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an interesting result, with 83% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that the activities were personally worthwhile. This is explored further in the discussion section where the data from the personal interviews provides additional support for these figures.

Q 3. I feel my workplace environment is more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As many of the participants do not work together, this is not an unexpected outcome. However it is interesting to note that, whilst 53% neither agreed or disagreed, 47% did feel that their work environment had become more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.
Q 4. I feel more motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The design brief included providing opportunities for developing interpersonal relationships, the fact so many agreed to feeling more motivated at work is an interesting finding and is expanded upon in the discussion section.

Q 5. I feel more de-motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
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This statement elicited similar responses to DiggerCo and it may be that the one participant that responded with an ‘agree’ perhaps misunderstood this particular question based on their responses to other similar questions.
Q 6. The team building activities will help improve my job performance now and in the future.

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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(71%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
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<td>(23%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>(6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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This is an interesting finding, with 71% agreeing that the activities will help their job performance now and in the future, and only 23% responding by neither agreeing or disagreeing.

Q 7. Overall, I feel that the team building activities had a positive impact on my workplace as a whole.

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<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(76%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(24%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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Despite the fact that many of the participants do not work together in the same physical location, the overall response to this statement produced an interesting result that is further discussed in the following chapter.
Q 8. Qualitative comments

Thinking about the team building activities, what in your opinion was particularly beneficial in terms of improving overall workplace performance?

1. Developing relationships - other parts of the business/networking/contacts (9)
2. Developing self-awareness - strengths/weaknesses (7)
3. NIL responses (1)

Total replies: 17

Section 2 - Questions 1-8 Summary:

This section was concerned with participant’s overall perceptions of the team building activities, which overall were extremely positive and are further discussed in the following chapter.
Section 3 - Interpersonal relationships:

Q 9. I feel that I am better able to communicate with other members of my team as a result of the team building activities.

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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>12 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>5 (29%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
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Part of the design brief was to support the leadership programme aims. In order to facilitate this, one of the key objectives was to include activities that would increase/enhance communication.

Q 10. Compared with before the team building activities, my level of trust and confidence in my colleagues has increased.

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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree:</td>
<td>4 (23%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>10 (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>3 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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82% either strongly agreed or agreed that their level of trust and confidence had increased due to participation in the team building activities. These figures also support the design brief objectives, and are further discussed in the following chapter.
Q 11. I feel that I better understand my colleagues as a result of the team building activities.

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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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As with the two previous statements, the majority (82%) of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt better able to understand their colleagues, and these figures provide significant support for this statement.

Section 3 - Questions 9-11 Summary:

This section was based around interpersonal relationships which were one of the objectives of the design brief. Overall the results appear to be positive, thus suggesting that this objective was met, and is further discussed in the following chapter.
Section 4 - Organisation commitment:

Q 12. As a result of the team building activities I feel more committed to the organisation and I am less likely to leave in the near future.

- Strongly Agree: 2 (12%)
- Agree: 6 (35%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree: 8 (47%)
- Disagree: 1 (6%)
- Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

This section was concerned with organisational commitment. The figures show 47% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with an equal figure neither agreeing or disagreeing. The 47% strongly agreeing or agreeing is nevertheless an interesting finding.

Q 13. As a result of the team building activities I feel better about the organisation and am more likely to talk positively about it outside of my workplace.

- Strongly Agree: 3 (18%)
- Agree: 9 (53%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree: 5 (29%)
- Disagree: 0 (0%)
- Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

This question was included in support of Question 12. 71% either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt better about the organisation and were more likely to speak positively about the organisation outside of their workplace.
Q 14. As a result of the team building activities I now feel like a ‘part of the family’ in my organisation.

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<tr>
<th>Response Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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This statement elicited an overwhelmingly positive response (100%) and is further discussed in the following chapter.

Section 4 - Questions 12-13 summary

Whilst only three statements concerning organizational commitment were included in this section, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. The final question in this section provides a very interesting finding, with 100% agreeing that as a result of the team building activities they felt part of the family. This is further discussed, with support from the personal interviews, in the following chapter.
Section 5 - Goal setting:

Q 15. I feel the team building activities motivated me to set goals that will assist me in my workplace performance.

Strongly Agree: 4 (24%)
Agree: 7 (41%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 6 (35%)
Disagree: 0 (0%)
Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

This section was concerned with goal setting, which was not an overall aim of the team building activities. It is interesting to see that 65% either strongly agreed or agreed that, as a result of the team building activities, they felt more motivated to set goals in order to assist them in their workplace performance.

Q 16. I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities.

Strongly Agree: 1 (6%)
Agree: 8 (47%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 7 (41%)
Disagree: 1 (6%)
Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

This is an interesting result, as 53% strongly agree or agree that they feel better able to achieve workplace goals, as opposed to 41% who neither agreed or disagreed.
Q 17. Compared with before the team building activities, my workplace has become more productive.

Strongly Agree: 0 (0%)
Agree: 5 (29%)
Neither Agree or Disagree: 11 (65%)
Disagree: 1 (6%)
Strongly Disagree: 0 (0%)

Whilst some of the participants work in the same physical locale, they do not work together, thus these responses are not unexpected. However, it is interesting to note that 29% agreed that their workplace had become more productive. The 29% that agreed could be due to those particular participants putting into action what they had learned from the programme with their own staff.

Section 5 - Questions 15-17 summary:

This section was primarily concerned with goal setting. Overall the results were positive and are further discussed in the following chapter.
Section 6 - Problem solving:

Q 18. I am better able to identify and evaluate problems in my job as a result of the team building activities.

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<td>Agree:</td>
<td>6 (35%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>8 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
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The problem solving activities encouraged participants to think about the way they identify and evaluate problems in their workplace. 53% strongly agreed or agreed that they did feel better able to identify and evaluate problems as a result of the team building activities.

Q 19. I am better equipped to implement and resolve solutions to problems in my workplace as a result of the team building activities.

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<tr>
<td>Agree:</td>
<td>11 (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree:</td>
<td>5 (29%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree:</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree:</td>
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These results indicate that the majority (65%) of the participants agreed that they felt better equipped to implement and resolve problems in the workplace as a result of the team building activities.
Q 20. Overall, do you feel that the team building activities have been beneficial to your organisation?

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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>4 (24%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagreed</td>
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As noted in DiggerCo results, this question relates directly to the research question and indicates that overall the participants thought the team building activities were beneficial to the organisation.

Q 21. Qualitative comments

Please briefly explain your response to question 20.

1. Develop interpersonal relationship skills (9)
2. NIL responses (4)
3. Motivation (2)
4. Developing self-awareness (1)
5. Not important (1)

Total replies: 17
Q 22. Qualitative comments

Please describe your initial reaction when you first heard that you would be participating in team building activities.

1. Positive (10)
2. Nervous/apprehensive (3)
3. Negative (2)
4. Neutral (2)
Total replies: 17

Q 23. Qualitative comments

Referring to question 22 has your attitude towards team building activities changed? Please briefly explain your response.

1. Yes - much more open/personal gains/enjoyed competitiveness (12)
2. Neutral - positive about team building so no change (4)
3. Pointless (1)
Total replies: 17

Section 6 - Questions 18-20 summary:

This section was concerned with problem solving skills and organisational benefits. In addition, participants were also asked to comment on their thoughts regarding participating in
the team building activities before and after completion. All of the areas generated significant positive data which is further explored in the discussion section.

4.7 FizzCo - Personal interviews

Two participants were interviewed from FizzCo along with the organisational development manager, whose interview comments will follow this section.

The interview opened by asking the interviewee(s) to recount their overall thoughts on the team building activities. The first interviewee noted; “Yep I really liked them, it’s hard sometimes to actually define whether or not you learned something from them…it’s quite interesting that the company puts value in things like that, but I really like them. I often think about team building like ‘God, team building’, but then when I do them, I love every second”.

The second interviewee said; “It was a lot of fun, I really enjoyed myself”.

In terms of being worthwhile personally, one of the interviewees began by saying; “Yes I got to know a lot of other people in the business, made a lot of contacts, but I don’t think I learned a hell of a lot about myself because they were quite tame activities”. The benefits were probably more around where I fitted in a team environment, how I communicated with others and how clear if at all my communication was”. Contradicting the “tame activities” label, the interviewee added; “…in those environments you do things that are outside of your comfort zone, and for me that was great, like the fact that I was the first one down the hill in the go-kart and that’s not normally me, peer pressure in those groups mean you don’t want to let anyone down so you go ahead and do those things”. Continuing with this train of thought, the interviewee finished by adding; “They were great, everyone could participate no matter
what their level and that’s why I think I have a negative view of team building, you know people being pushed outside of their comfort zone. Often you get asked to do things that you really hate. You know someone joked about running up that hill next door to us. I would not have found that fun, I would have done it, but my reaction to this survey would have been very different”.

Regarding their opinions on what, if any, benefits accrued to the organisation as a result of the team building activities, one participant said; “…increased knowledge of other people in the business, knowing where to contact them…I go to quite a few meetings where other high performers (refers to the group involved in the two day programme) and they now have more credence in my mind because they were part of that group. So, yes I think there was definitely a benefit to the organisation because I have now got a key group of stakeholders that I can go to with any concerns”.

In terms of increased/enhanced interpersonal relationships, one of the participants thought that the team building activities really assisted in raising awareness of how they communicated, this was a key point as it formed one of the design brief objectives. The interviewee said; “The way that I spoke to others, the words I used, all the activities that we did put you in a position where you had to communicate effectively, we had a choice…so that when you get back to your everyday job you are a bit more conscious about what you are saying and how you say it”. The second interviewee noted; “The type of communication has changed, it’s not as formal as it was. I can pick up the phone now rather than sending an email. Casual quick conversations now because they know who you are which is a good thing”. Other than increased communication skills, the interviewee went on to note that by participating in the activities, their trust and confidence had also increased, stating; “I have called colleagues to get some
feedback on something that I have sent through, so it’s been communication around my brands. I have called to see if my communication was clear, asking them ‘do you think that everyone will understand it, is there anything I could have done better’. So as a result of the team building I am definitely trying to make a conscious decision to do things better”.

The researcher was keen to know if these changes were a direct result of the team building activities or a combination of the leadership programme and the activities, the interviewee responded; “They were definitely attributable to the team building activities”. The interviewee went on to add; “I would not have called my colleagues to get feedback in the past, so yes it has changed. My relationship with the people in the XL group has changed. I have stayed in contact with a lot of people that I did not know before in different parts of the business, but it has also allowed me to better understand everyone else in the business as well, and I also have a better perspective on the different areas in the business and what other people’s roles are and how I can help them and they can help me”.

In terms of whether they had heard any comments from other participants, one interviewee stated; “When we got back to work, some people found they were really helpful and they commented they had got quite a bit out of them. Others found that they were just sort of participating for the sake of participating, just doing some fun activities, you know to sort of break up the day. There were definitely mixed feelings about the team building. I think it came down to the individuals and how open they were to learning from each experience I guess”. However, a later conversation at a meeting with fellow high performance team members resulted in this comment; “Well, we were all talking about the go-carts and what we were going to do with them, and again it got quite competitive, you know, whose cart was the best, and of course it was ours! I guess the fact that we were discussing it keeps the memories alive, so that is a good thing”. The second interviewee could not recall any comments regarding the
team building upon returning to the workplace, but pointed out the reason for this may be due to the fact that they work in a satellite branch, and therefore have little contact with other colleagues.

In terms of organisational commitment, the first participant made the observation that the mere act of being invested in was definitely a real plus, noting in an exuberant manner;

“...yes, as I said it’s lovely to be invested in, it really is...it is a brilliant company and it keeps getting better. These kind of things (refers to team building activities) it shows that our company is developing with the times, and in this market where finding the right employees is tough, it is good to see that they are putting their money in the right places...I love this company”. The second participant echoed these comments, saying; “I was already committed to the business, but I think the way I am committing has changed as a result of the team building activities. I am more willing to put my hand up for things, more willing to get involved in different parts of the business, more willing to learn about other parts of the business. I am asking a lot more questions about the business and expecting more in return. The way I use my time here has changed, so that’s where that change in commitment has come from”.

The researcher did not ask either of the interviewees about the underlying aim of some of the activities, however both made similar comments when asked about what they thought of the actual activities. The first interviewee noted; “At the beginning of every activity it was quite clear what the objective of that activity was and why we were doing it. There was some indication of what was expected that we would get out of the activity, but we weren’t told, ‘ok, heres what you do and this is how you should feel afterwards…”

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“I could relate every activity that we did back to the workplace, to some sort of work function.
I could see it without it being explained to me - why we were doing the activities and what we were supposed to get out of it, you could definitely see how they related back to work”.

When asked if there was anything that they wished to add, one noted that in terms of overall benefits to the organisation, it was their opinion that providing opportunities to hone communication skills, meeting and getting to know other members of the high performance team along with being able to identify colleagues that they could go to should they need advice or guidance, was not only personally worthwhile, but did in fact benefit the organisation as well.

The final interview was undertaken with the organisational development manager, and followed a slightly different format to the participants’ personal interview format.

The interview began by asking the manager what the overall purpose of the team building activities was, to which the reply was; “To quickly establish relationships with the people who don’t normally work together, being the high performance group. To provide opportunities for people to work closely together on tasks and experience what that was like …and to see what those experiences were like in terms of frustration or ease in working with others. To use the activities as a way to observe others, receive feedback about yourself…”.

The next question related to the manager’s opinions regarding the benefits of using team building activities such as those that the high performance team engaged in. The manager noted; “They help with the engagement of people who are seen as critical talent in the business who you definitely want to develop and retain, so taking them out of the workplace and giving them time to do the activities together really helps to build the idea they are valued employees and valued for what they bring to the organisation…in terms of the particular type
of activities being used as metaphors for things like problem solving, it meant that the high performers could really work on working with other colleagues to identify, and then work out the best way to resolve the problem. This was particularly evident in the activity based around the catapults”.

The researcher then asked whether any organisational benefits accrued to the organisation as a result of the high performance team members participating in the team building activities. The manager responded by saying; “From my perspective, its about growing people, I believe that growing people’s self-awareness enables them to better develop themselves, and then perhaps be even better at helping others do the same. I think people learn best through experience as opposed to being told what to do, and that is a real benefit to this organisation. The whole idea of getting to know their colleagues, working on communication skills which involves giving and receiving feedback, working as a team member, these are all benefits, and I think for those reasons the use of team building activities such as the ones we used are very beneficial, especially when they support …or rather reinforce the overall objectives of the leadership programme…which I might add they did so!”

The organisational development manager then asked the researcher to play back what they had said, and then added; “The other thing about benefits to the organisation is simply the idea of taking time out from work to have fun together…it just takes some of the seriousness and stress out of our usually high pressured, stressful jobs…another benefit to the organisation was that we incorporated our values and overall theme into the activities… I guess we focused on our people value, our innovation value and our excellence and passion, the activities were also about giving something away which was part of the Johari’s window concept, and that also aligned with our citizenship values, so in a way we really were
reinforcing what the company believes are the ‘appropriate’ ways of behaving in this business”.

The organisational development manager also noted there never seems to be adequate time, referring to taking key managers out of the business for two days. As a result the interviewee felt that perhaps not enough time had been allocated in some activities to really reinforce the analogies to the workplace through more in-depth de-briefings. However, the manager did think that, overall, the participants had gained significantly from the experience. In summary, the manager observed; “The real value is that once people are engaged in those type of activities, they are relaxed having fun and the learning is almost accidental at times...well not accidental, what’s the word...it doesn’t feel forced”.

Case summary

The questionnaire results and personal interviews indicate several key themes emerging. The majority of participants agreed they had enjoyed the team building activities. The participants also agreed that the team building activities had assisted with getting to know their colleagues, enhanced trust and understanding, and communication skills. Interestingly, more than half of the participants also felt more motivated to set goals that would assist them in their workplace performance. In addition, 100% of the respondents felt more like part of the family, with just over 70% agreeing they were more likely to talk about the organisation in a positive manner outside of the workplace. In summary, the main themes to emerge were; overall enjoyment of the activities, development of interpersonal skills, specifically, increased/enhanced communication, understanding, trust and confidence in colleagues, and goal setting.

The key findings are discussed in more depth in Chapter 5.
5. Findings and Analysis

5.1 Objective and outline

The overall aim of this case study research was to discover what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities; as perceived by the participants and the training managers from both organisations. This chapter considers the results of the questionnaires and personal interviews along with the design briefs and observations from DiggerCo and FizzCo in light of the literature, and analyses the findings in order to provide answers to the research question. A cross-case analysis is shown in chart form and is accompanied by a discussion of the similarities and differences between the two organisations.

5.2 DiggerCo - Findings

Providing opportunities for the participants to step outside of their usual role of ‘boss’, to work alongside their colleagues acknowledging the various skills that each brings to the organisation, and to reinforce the importance of team work, were pivotal to the design brief. In addition, the company’s values and the newly introduced ‘clean green team’ theme were to be incorporated into the overall programme. In order to meet the design brief objectives, the facilitator designed a programme that reflected the competitive industry the managers work in. The activities provided the participants with opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships, encouraged team work and reflected the company’s values. The key interrelationships resulting from the observation and data collected via the questionnaires and personal interviews are now discussed as they relate to the design brief objectives.
Overall views

The questionnaire opened by asking participants to rate their overall enjoyment of the team building activities. An overwhelming majority (96%) either strongly agreed or agreed they had enjoyed participating in the activities. This was evidenced by plenty of laughter and good natured sledging during the activities, and it was clear during the observation that the participants were really enjoying themselves. The participants were asked to briefly explain why they enjoyed the activities and the qualitative responses revealed two key themes, the first being a well facilitated and enjoyable programme. ‘Having fun’ emerged as a common phrase when the participants were asked to briefly describe what made the team building activities enjoyable. Some of the comments included;

“It was good fun and got everyone talking”, “They were fun, bit of a laugh and a respite from sitting inside talking”, and “They were a great deal of fun”.

This theme was also strongly supported by the four personal interviews with comments including:

“The degree of competitiveness made it more enjoyable”, “They were a bit of fun…working together, getting to know each other on a more personal basis”, “It was having fun and trying to beat each other up…which brings different personalities out”.

The training manager from DiggerCo corroborated the participants’ comments noting: “The activities were creative, fun and enjoyable…the feedback I received pointed to the activities also being well received by the boys”.
Having fun was also linked to the facilitation which contributed to the overall enjoyment of the activities. Some of the comments included:

“I think the facilitator was very good, he is obviously used to getting people working together”. “I don’t think it would have been successful if it was boring and that’s what a group like ours needed, its making things happen and that’s the key to successful facilitation”. “The facilitator was a very enthusiastic organiser, and that makes a big difference, a lively personality and some of that definitely rubs off”.

The facilitator deliberately designed a programme in conjunction with the training manager that would reflect the competitive nature of the industry within which the participants work. The personal interviews combined with several of the qualitative comments point to this being well received. This finding is in contrast to a study undertaken by Ibbetson and Newell (1999) which compared the outcomes of a competitive and non-competitive outdoor management development programme undertaken by MBA students. Ibbetson and Newell (1999) questioned each team two hours after completion of the activities and found that success tended to be defined in terms of how well the individual’s team had done in the competition. Those individuals that had done well in the competition felt the experience had been personally beneficial. Conversely, those individuals that were in teams that did not do so well tended to think the activities had not been personally beneficial. Ibbetson and Newell (1999) concluded that the “destructive impact of competition” (p. 61) negatively impacted on the participants experience of the programme.
The design brief called for activities that would allow the participants to get to know one another better by providing opportunities for the participants to work together. The observation, questionnaires and personal interviews all provided strong support for this objective being met, as the second key theme to emerge was: ‘getting to know colleagues better’. During the ice breaker activities, the participants had the opportunity to get to know one another in a more relaxed environment and by the time the indoor activities commenced many were more familiar with colleagues’ names and positions within the company.

As part of the overall views section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked if they felt the activities had had a positive impact on their workplace. The results showed 74% either strongly agreeing/agreeing. The following question asked participants why they thought this was so. Again the key theme to emerge was ‘getting to know colleagues’, the following qualitative comments represent the majority of the responses:

“It was the first time I had met with many on the course so an excellent way to get to know them better”, “it was good meeting others in the team”, and “…a good way to get to know people”.

The opportunity to meet other colleagues in a relaxed setting was a comment often heard during the observation and this was further supported by the personal interviews. One of the interviewees has worked for DiggerCo for over 16 years and despite having met some of the participants prior to the team building activities, noted the team building activities were beneficial, saying; “it helped in getting to know each on a more personal level”. When asked whether the team building activities were personally worthwhile, the participant commented; “…yeah I do and the biggest benefit was working alongside people you don’t know”. Another
interviewee has been with the company for over seven years and their overall comments

echoed the previous interviewee; “overall it provided an opportunity to gain valuable insights
into how people work, communicate and get on with others”.

The training manager from DiggerCo felt the design brief objective of developing/enhancing
interpersonal relationships had been successfully achieved, going on to note that, by
incorporating an element of fun within a slightly competitive environment, all the participants
were kept fully engaged. Judging by the feedback received, the training manager believed the
use of such activities had worked well. The questionnaire results support this observation,
with 76% of the participants either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they felt better able to
communicate with their colleagues as a result of the team building activities. Toofany (2007)
suggests that the overriding purpose of team building is the improvement of communication.
This positive response certainly implies that there is some value in utilising team building
activities to improve communication skills. Further support for this is provided by the
qualitative comments in the questionnaire which included;

“Enhancing interpersonal and communication skills amongst us”, “it opened lines of
communication that were not previously open and it allowed some of the more retiring types
to step up and take charge” and “…made communication easier when I got back to the
workplace, good to know who I am talking to, so in that respect it was very beneficial for me
personally”.

The interpersonal section also asked the participants whether they felt better able to
understand their colleagues as a result of the team building activities, which resulted in 76%
agreeing they did, which is a significant finding as this was, as previously noted, a key
objective of the design brief. The next question regarding interpersonal relationships asked the participants whether they felt their level of trust and confidence in their colleagues had increased as compared with before the team building activities. This question resulted in 52% agreeing that it had increased. While not overwhelming, it is still a positive finding as it indicates that just over half of the questionnaire respondents did find getting to know their colleagues better to be beneficial. Overall, the results tend to support research indicating the importance of developing interpersonal skills. As the majority of participants occupy management roles, the following quote by Robbins et al. (2008) is especially pertinent. “One common thread runs through the functions, roles, skills, activities approaches to management…it is clear that managers need to develop their people skills if they are going to be effective and successful” (p. 9).

**Problem solving**

During the final activity the researcher was able to observe the teams working out how to construct and use the slingshots. The questions pertaining to problem solving, however, resulted in an inconclusive response. The first question in the problem solving section asked whether or not the participants felt better able to identify and evaluate problems in their job as a result of the team building activities, which resulted in 47% adopting a neutral stance, and 53% either strongly agreeing or agreeing. However, the following question elicited a more positive response with 65% agreeing that they felt better able to implement and resolve problems as a result of the team building activities. The slingshot activity, while entertaining, did not provoke any discussion regarding identifying, evaluating, implementing or resolving problems in the workplace. Rather, the teams approached the activity as yet another competitive aspect of the day’s activities, and once again the overall goal of the teams
appeared to be building the most structurally sound slingshot which, the teams hoped, would be capable of firing and hitting the target. Because this particular activity was held late in the day, and timing was an issue, the facilitator (and the training manager) decided to extend the activity by an extra 30 minutes as the activity proved rather popular. This meant that the facilitator was unable to solicit any constructive feedback about how the teams worked through the problems that each team faced in the construction and accurate firing of the catapults.

Thus the use of this particular activity as a metaphor for problem solving was not reinforced. However, some of the informal feedback at the conclusion of the activity, along with the personal interviews, indicated that as with the previous ‘pentathlon’ activities, the competitive element again reflected the industry that the participants work in and, in that respect, the activities could be related back to their workplace.

The questionnaire also asked participants whether they felt the activities were personally worthwhile and this produced an interesting response given the positive replies to the questions above. While 52% strongly agreed or agreed that the activities were personally worthwhile, 48% neither agreed nor disagreed. This finding appears to contradict the otherwise positive responses regarding workplace benefits, such as increased/enhanced communication, trust and confidence, and feeling better able to understand their colleagues. Reasons for this apparent contradiction are discussed in the cross-case differences analysis. An anomaly was revealed in the replies to whether the team building activities would help improve the participant’s job performance now and in the future. 68% from DiggerCo neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. One reason for this, as noted earlier in this thesis, is the possibility that the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ option was used as a proxy for not-
applicable, meaning the participants did not see any connection between the team building activities and how that may contribute to improving their job performance. While the literature points to several factors that contribute to improved job performance, such as increased/enhanced interpersonal skills, the overall figures lend support to Robbins et al (2001) observation that a weak but positive relationship exists between participation in team building activities and improved job performance.

**Organisation commitment**

While organisational commitment was not able to be physically observed, it was included in this study as a potential ancillary benefit. The researcher did however have the opportunity to speak with several of the participants at the end of the ice breaker activities and then again at the conclusion of the team building activities. There did appear to be an overall sense of respect for the organisation and a real feeling of ‘being part of the family’ with various participants referring to the company as being; “family oriented”, “a real team spirit”, “family values”. Of the three questions pertaining to organisational commitment, only one resulted in an even split between strongly agreeing/agreeing and neither agreeing nor disagreeing (48%) with the other two resulting in a significantly positive response. Despite the even split between feeling more committed to the organisation as a result of the team building activities, 71% were more likely to talk positively about the company outside of the workplace and a definitive 100% of the participants felt more like ‘a part of the family’ (71% strongly agreed, 29% agreed). These findings are supported by extant literature regarding organisational commitment that shows well facilitated team building activities can be instrumental in gaining and/or enhancing employees’ level of organisational commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Bartlett, 2001; Tansky & Cohen, 2001). In addition, the value of having employees talk
positively about the organisation outside of the workplace is noted by Boshoff and Mels (2000) who state that employee attitudes and behaviours are important to an organisation, as they can “erode or enhance a company’s reputation” (p. 256).

**Goal setting**

While it was clear during the observation that each of the teams had set a short term goal of winning the overall competition, it was not possible to observe goal setting by individuals. Therefore, goal setting can only be discussed in terms of the questionnaire and personal interview results. Three questions pertaining to goal setting were asked in the questionnaire. The first question related to whether the participants felt more motivated to set goals that would assist them in their workplace performance. Of the twenty-five respondents, 48% neither agreed nor disagreed, 32% agreed, and 20% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The second question ‘I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities’, resulted in 56% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 28% agreeing, and 16% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The following question, ‘compared with before the team building activities my workplace has become more productive’, resulted in 72% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 8% disagreeing and 12% strongly disagreeing, with a meagre 8% agreeing.

A possible explanation for these results may lie in the fact that goal setting was not an overarching objective and, other than the short term goal of winning, was not discussed as part of the feedback that followed most of the activities. Nevertheless, eight of the participants did feel they were more motivated to set goals that would assist their workplace performance and for those eight the team building activities resulted in a positive outcome.
The final question in this section asked the participants whether they felt that, overall, the activities had been beneficial to their organisation. This resulted in 76% agreeing, with less than a quarter remaining neutral (24%). While some of the questionnaire results may not appear to have supported this overall positive response, the qualitative comments provide insight into what the participants saw as organisational benefits, and their comments were also echoed by the interviewees. The qualitative comments were grouped into themes and the key theme to emerge in terms of organisational benefits was the opportunity to develop interpersonal relationship skills. Comments from the questionnaire included:

“It developed a strong team bond”, “It has helped us understand and bond with our fellow employees in and out of the workplace environment”, “Yep, it got everyone talking from the different groups”.

Participants’ perceptions of team building

The final section of the questionnaire was concerned with the participants’ opinions on team building prior to the team building activities and whether their opinions had altered following participation. The researcher was interested in the participants’ perceptions of the term ‘team building’ because as noted in the introduction one of the disadvantages of team building is often the negative way it is perceived. The initial reactions were almost evenly split between ‘no interest’ (56%) and ‘acceptance’ (44%). Indicative of the negative opinions were comments such as;

“I thought how would silly games be good for team building” (participant number 3), “oh no why, where’s the bar?”(participant number 6), “disgust” (participant number 4), “I thought I
would rather have two days at home” (participant number 16), “I wonder what activities have been dreamt up this time” (participant number 12), and “Oh dear, not again” (participant number 19).

Had these participants read the New Zealand Sunday magazine referred to in the introduction, it appears many would have been in full agreement with the sentiments expressed regarding team building ‘away days’ as being something that one just had to accept and get on with in life. Of the twenty-five qualitative comments pertaining to post-event responses to the activities, seven said their opinion had not really changed, although some did mention that they had nevertheless enjoyed themselves. As this thesis is concerned with organisational benefits stemming from the use of team building activities, the sixteen participants who reversed their original opinion is of particular interest and tends to support the importance of a well-facilitated and enjoyable team building programme in engaging participants, thus perhaps encouraging the participants to be more open to the idea of team building, and as a result more open therefore to the acquisition of new skills.

Quoting the same participants as before, number 3 stated; “yes it certainly helped with creating a team”. Number 6 had experienced a significant change of opinion, going from “disgust” to; “found it beneficial to loosen everybody up. Also it allowed other people’s strengths to come forward. Sometimes the younger guys in a work situation are scared to speak up against the tried and true who are not always right”. Number 4 had also changed his opinion offering; “Yes - slightly more open to it”. Number 12 had also altered his original opinion noting; “To a degree as the activities were a lot of fun”. Number 19 said; “Yes, if all team building activities were facilitated as well and were as well organised they would be
great…” Finally, number 10 noted; “Yes it has, have never done a lot of it so I am a lot more open about doing this sort of thing now”.

Additional findings

While the observation was undertaken in order to provide context and assist in understanding any references made to the activities in the questionnaire or subsequent interviews, the observation also provided other insights. As the team building activities began, the researcher was able to observe the teams moving through the first four stages of Tuckman’s five stage life-cycle model. The five stages are known as “forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning” (Robbins et al., 2001, p. 273).

Early in the observation phase it appeared that the ice breaker activities enabled the teams to move quickly through the norming stage which, according to Tuckman’s model, is characterised by uncertainty. This stage was evidenced by the members of some teams initially standing back with arms crossed and looking slightly concerned about what was going to happen next. However, once the ice breaker activities were underway, most appeared quite relaxed and as the participants moved indoors to start the pentathlon there was quite a bit of talking and laughter amongst the participants.

Once indoors the participants were put into teams. Storming forms the second stage of the cycle according to the model. The researcher observed (and heard) team members jostling for leadership roles, many of the members talking over each other and considerable disagreement amongst team members on how best to approach the activities. This led to some frustration resulting in some very colourful language emanating from some of the groups. Once the
leadership roles had been established, and members felt they were being heard and acknowledged, the teams appeared to move into the norming stage. This stage was characterised by all team members co-operating with one another as they really began to work towards the end goal. The norming stage was summarised by one of the participants during the observation who noted his team “were finally all on the same page”. This stage was possibly accelerated by the competition actually starting, and the competitive nature of the team members kicking in, with all members of the teams driven by the desire to win ‘gold’. It was at this point the groups began to demonstrate a sense of cohesiveness which is defined by Kayes, Kayes and Kolb (2005) as a “degree of camaraderie or esprit de corps” (p. 344). This was evidenced by team members actively encouraging one another by calling out the team name and/or individuals names during the team races, and constantly assuring one another that they were doing well, along with reasonably good natured sledging of the other teams. These observations concur with Greenberg and Baron (2008) who state that group cohesiveness tends to be strengthened with the threat of competition. The personal interviews also indicated that once the teams had got to know one another, they had established a common goal, that of winning, and were all very competitive. This was summed up by one of the interviewees who noted; “We are all similar in that respect, this industry would eat you up if you didn’t have that competitive streak, that’s why it was like…right it’s war, bring it on” This idea of similarities assisting in developing a cohesive unit is supported by Kayes, Kayes and Kolb (2005) who state that “smaller teams with members who have similar attitudes tend to be more cohesive than other teams” (p. 344).

Finally, as the teams really got into the activities, and the scores were being put up on the scoreboard, the teams moved into the performing stage, which according to Robbins et al. (2001) is summarised as moving forward and getting on with the task at hand. This stage was
observed towards the end of the competition as the teams became solely focused on winning the ‘gold medal’, and was characterised by the teams yelling words of encouragement, but little if any direct instruction to competing individuals was observed, as by this stage the teams had all worked out a winning strategy and were solely focused on crossing the ‘finish line’.

Baldwin and Keating (1998) discuss the forming of a team in their study of team building and their descriptions reflect the observations made by this researcher. Baldwin and Keating (1998) noted that the participants began the day as individuals, analysing every activity from their own perspective. The participants also expressed uncertainty about participating in the activities. Their comments referred to whether the activities would make them look foolish and whether in fact they would be able to complete the activities. This point was in fact raised by one of the interviewees from DiggerCo, who stated; “I think the worst thing about team building, and this may be common…it's the fear of making a fool or idiot of yourself”.

However, once the teams began to get to know one another via the use of ice breaker activities, the individuals began to identity with the ‘team’ and were then able to work together to accomplish each of the activities.

**Summary of findings**

This research began with the question “what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?” The results and subsequent discussion indicate that the participants from DiggerCo were in fact able to identify several organisational benefits resulting from the team building activities. The key qualitative themes as previously noted in the results section and discussed in this chapter indicate that without exception the participants enjoyed the activities.
In terms of tangible organisational benefits, the most significant theme to emerge was the opportunity to meet and get to know other colleagues in the business. This was shown in the largely positive response to the questionnaire section pertaining to interpersonal relationship skills. The majority of participants agreed they felt better able to communicate with and understand their colleagues as a result of engaging in the team building activities.

Furthermore, and an important finding for DiggerCo, is that over 70% were more likely to speak positively about the company outside of the workplace and the same number also agreed they felt more like ‘part of the family’.

The training manager echoed many of the comments made in the questionnaire and the personal interviews, and also noted that one of the company directors who was present for the day was thoroughly impressed with the facilitator’s delivery of the programme and that, in his opinion, the overall aims of the team building activities had well and truly been met. One other point of interest was the sheer positiveness of the results overall, irrespective of any other factors. The observations, the results from the questionnaires, the personal interviews, and conversations with some of the participants, training manager and one of the company directors who were present for the day all indicated an overwhelmingly positive experience with the team building activities.

The final interview was conducted with the training manager who was present for the two day programme. The first question related to the overall aims of the team building activities, and whether or not they had been met. The training manager believed the activities to be very beneficial, particularly in providing the participants with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the complex nature of teams, recognising the various skills each member brings to a team, and getting to know one another better. The training manager summarised
these points, noting; “Providing a setting that included fun and an element of competitiveness enabled the guys to learn more about each other in terms of working together…and judging from the feedback it was well received by the lads”.

5.3 FizzCo - Findings

As with DiggerCo, the key interrelationships between the design brief, observation, questionnaires and personal interviews are discussed and analysed in light of the literature regarding team building. The design brief for FizzCo was to base a team building programme around the Johari’s window model which formed the basis for the overall leadership programme. The model aids in understanding the individual’s interpersonal skills through disclosure and feedback. In addition to incorporating aspects of Johari’s model into the overall team building programme, the organisational development manager also wanted the participants to get to know one another better, work on individual and team communication skills, and reinforce the company’s values.

Overall views

The key interrelationships between the design brief, observation, questionnaire results and personal interviews involved four key areas, the first of which was overall enjoyment of the team building activities. The observation commenced with three ice breaker activities. The activities were designed to introduce the concept of Johari’s window model. The first activity involved disclosure of individual names, position in the company, favourite cartoon character and dream holiday destination. During the ice breaker activities the researcher had the opportunity to wander around the various groups and spend time listening to participants’
comments. Many of the participants referred to the activities as a great way to get to know their colleagues in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Other comments related to the facilitator encouraging everyone to participate and have some fun. Participants were initially asked to rate their overall enjoyment of the team building activities, which resulted in 95% of the participants strongly agreeing/agreeing that they had enjoyed the activities. The participants were then asked to briefly explain their responses. Two key themes emerged as a result. The first theme was ‘well facilitated and enjoyable’ illustrated by comments such as;

“The activities were well facilitated, and fun…most important!” , “Really in to it, good activities”, “The activities matched the objectives and were well planned and presented”, “The activities appeared to be well structured and allowed the members to feel comfortable and work together, the environment was great and the participants were not put on the spot”.

The second theme to emerge was ‘meeting other colleagues’ and participants’ comments in support of this theme included:

“It was a great opportunity to meet other people that the business regard as high potential”, A great opportunity to work alongside other members of our organisation who have never met before” and “A fantastic way of meeting people”.

The organisational development manager also acknowledged the importance of providing opportunities for the participants to meet each other saying;

“Another benefit is breaking down the high performance individuals in the business. The team activities provided that opportunity by having mixed groups across the business units and also
across levels of management…it provides opportunities to set up relationships in the future, understand other business units and perhaps even open people up to ringing those people as mentors…perhaps to pick their brains”.

The third key theme to emerge was enhanced/increased communication. As part of the design brief was for the participants to give and receive feedback, and work on the way they communicated with colleagues, all of the activities were designed to provide opportunities for this to occur. 71% of the participants agreed that they felt better able to communicate with their colleagues as a result of the team building activities. During the personal interview the organisational development manager noted the importance of encouraging communication skills through the activities, saying; “One of the key ways you achieve things is working with others and understanding your strengths and their strengths…the key way we do that is through communication. We need to be able to involve activities that involve communicating to achieve the end goal”. Corroborating the organisational development managers comments, one of the interviewees noted; “The benefits of the activities were really around where I fitted into the team environment and how I communicated with others and how clear if at all my communication was. The way I spoke to others, the words I used…it put you in a position where you had to communicate effectively with people…and you received feedback from others if you weren’t communicating in a very clear way”. The researcher was interested in whether the improved communication was a direct result of participation in the team building activities, asking one of the participants during the interview. The one word response was; “Definitely”. Another interviewee, when asked if there had been any change in their communication skills, said; “Yes, and the type of communication has changed. It’s not as formal as it was, I can pick up the phone now rather than sending an email, casual quick conversations, because they know who you are now, which is a good thing”.

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Prior to one of the team building activities commencing, each participant was allocated a ‘secret buddy’ whom they were asked to observe and, at the conclusion of the activities, the secret buddies were revealed and they then spent some time together discussing the activity, how they had contributed and how they rated their communication skills. The facilitator then invited the pairs to share some of their feedback with the group as a whole. The majority of the participants related the activity back to the workplace, which was interesting, as the underlying objective of utilising metaphoric activities was to encourage the participants to relate the activities back to the workplace. Relating the activities back to the workplace was summarised by one of the interviewees, saying: “I could relate every activity we did back to the workplace, to some sort of work function. I could see it without it being explained to me … why we were doing the activities, and what we were supposed to get out of it. You could definitely tell that they were activities that related back to work”.

As earlier noted, few of the participants knew each other prior to arriving at the resort. The fourth theme to emerge therefore proved an interesting finding. The participants were asked whether their level of trust and confidence in their colleagues had increased as compared with prior to the team building, 83% strongly agreed/agreed that it had. While the questionnaire did not ask the participants to explain their reasons for increased levels of trust and confidence, and it was difficult to ascertain specific reasons during the observation, the personal interviews did indicate that being part of an ‘elite’ group may have been a contributing factor. One of the interviewees made the connection, stating; “We were all similar, in that we were all a ‘type’ of person where everyone wanted to participate. I believe it is because we are all like minded, you know we are all managers who have been defined as high potential, we were all there because we have the right attitude”.

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Key to the overall design brief was giving and receiving feedback, and this also contributed to developing a sense of trust and confidence in colleagues. This was echoed in the organisational development manager’s earlier comments regarding setting up future relationships in order to seek advice, assistance or even mentoring. This point was also raised by one of the interviewees who noted; “I would not have considered doing this prior to the team building, but I am now happy to call a colleague to get some feedback on something that I have sent through. I called that person to see if my communication was clear…do you think that everyone will understand it, is there anything I could have done better?” The final question in the overall views section asked whether participants felt better able to understand their colleagues as a result of the team building activities. Again 83% strongly agreed/agreed and this also provided significant support for the preceding two questions.

**Problem solving**

The questionnaire section pertaining to problem solving revealed that 53% of the participants felt better able to identify and evaluate problems as a result of the activities, with 65% feeling better equipped to implement and resolve solutions to problems in the workplace. The fact that just over half of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed with both of the questions is nonetheless significant. The team building activities all incorporated an element of problem solving which included identifying the best approach to the problem, evaluating options and then implementing the final decision. The personal interviews added further support to these findings. Observing the problem solving activities proved valuable in that it enabled the researcher to watch the teams come up with various strategies. The organisational development manager noted the value of activities that involve problem solving, stating:
“It was important to incorporate problem solving and decision making which probably meant compromising (laughs) and negotiating, but essentially they have a restricted period of time to achieve something and it forces them to do it in that time…and they all did!”

**Goal setting**

As with DiggerCo, individual goal setting was not able to be observed (other than short term goals of successfully completing the activities) so this part of the discussion relies on the questionnaire and personal interview responses.

The two questions relating to goal setting resulted in similar responses to the problem solving questions. The first question asked participants whether they felt motivated to set goals to assist them in their workplace performance, which resulted in 65% either strongly agreeing or agreeing. The following question asked whether the participants felt better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities, and this resulted in 53% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the question. A possible explanation for these responses may be a cross-over between the overall leadership programme and the team building activities. During the interviews the researcher asked the participants whether their answers were specific to the team building activities or a combination of the leadership programme and the team building activities. However, the two interviewees were both adamant that their responses to the interview questions were a direct result of the team building activities. Both of the interviewees noted that they felt more motivated to set goals upon returning to the workplace due to the facilitator reinforcing the importance of goal setting during the activities. One of the managers commented;
“The whole idea of goal setting became an attractive proposition when one could see the results of a well thought out plan”.

Organisational commitment

Along with several other academics, Redman and Snape (2005) suggest that organisational effectiveness is enhanced in organisations where organisations are able to elicit high levels of commitment from their employees. Meyer and Smith (2000), Bartlett, (2001), Tansky and Cohen (2001) have all noted that a well facilitated team building programme can be instrumental in gaining and/or enhancing employees’ levels of organisational commitment.

While the first question in the organisational commitment section elicited a response of 47% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they felt more committed to the organisation and less likely to leave as a result of the activities, a higher positive response rate (71%) resulted from the following question which related to feeling better about the organisation and more likely to talk positively about the organisation outside of the workplace. ‘Feeling more like a part of the family’ resulted in an unequivocal 100% positive response, with 71% strongly agreeing and 29% agreeing. This result lends support to the literature that states that an employer investing in a training and/or development programme is viewed positively by employees and is reciprocated by the employee in the form of increased organisational commitment (Benson, 2006). As with DiggerCo, it is acknowledged that the employees that agreed to participate in the personal interviews may have held stronger views than those that did not, however the results from the questionnaire and the personal interviews do tend to support the overall positive results. The questionnaire asked participants to expand on why the team building
activities were beneficial to their organisation, and many of the qualitative comments reflected the importance of being acknowledged by the company, for example;

*I believe it makes a clear statement that you are important to the business and by attending such events, it is a sign of recognition and appreciation*”, “*We are clearly important and have been recognised as such, so it’s really a good thing to be involved in*” and “*Further commitment to the organisation, particularly as a result of their investment in us as a team*”.

One of the personal interviewees also commented on the value of being recognised by the company noting; “*My key view about the team building activities is it is lovely to be invested in…its fantastic that our company invests in us in this way*”. In support of acknowledging the high performance team, the manager responsible for organisational development noted that part of the overall purpose of the team building activities was in fact to; “*Have some fun and celebrate and acknowledge the efforts of those people*”.

In light of the positive questionnaire responses to ‘talking more positively about the organisation’ and ‘feeling more like part of the family’ the researcher was interested in possible reasons for the 47% split between neither agree nor disagree and strongly agree or agree to the question regarding ‘feeling more committed to the organisation and thus less likely to leave in the near future’. One of the interviewees provided an interesting insight when asked whether their level of commitment had altered as a result of the team building which resulted in the following response; “*I think, already, I was committed to the organisation, but…I think the way I am committing to the business has now changed. I am more willing to put my hand up for things, more willing to get involved in different parts of the business, more willing to learn about other parts of the business. I am now asking a lot*
more questions about the business and expecting more in return...it is the way I use my time here that has changed, so that’s where I think my change in commitment comes from”.

One of the interview participants’ comments may shed some light on the reason for the lower positive response rate to the question regarding ‘feeling more committed to the organisation and less likely to leave in the near future as a result of the team building activities’. Some of the participants may have already been committed to the organisation, as the comments made by the interviewee quoted above show but, as a result of the company’s recognition and investment in them, they are perhaps even more likely to talk positively about the organisation outside of the workplace. Recognition by the company as being part of an elite group within the business also contributed to feeling ‘more like part of the family’. A secondary factor which may also have contributed to a lower positive response was the second part of the question which was ‘less likely to leave in the near future’. This may have resulted in some of the participants not wishing to commit themselves to such a definitive response, but instead indicate their commitment by agreeing with the other two organisational commitment questions.
Summary of findings

The four key themes to emerge from the physical data and the observation were: overall enjoyment, meeting other colleagues, increased/enhanced communication, and feeling better able to understand, trust and have confidence in colleagues. Although only short term goal setting was observed amongst the teams, the questionnaires and personal interviews did provide some support for the participants being more inclined to set goals that would assist them with their overall job performance. The problem solving section resulted in just over half of the participants agreeing that they had benefited from the team building activities in terms of being better able to identify and evaluate problems, and 65% agreed that they were in a better position to implement and resolve problems in the workplace. Another interesting finding was the fact that many of the participants indicated they were more likely to talk positively about their organisation outside of their workplace, and felt more like part of the family as a result of participating in the team building activities.
5.4 Cross case analysis 1 - Similarities strongly agree/agree

The overarching aim of this research was to assess what, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities; as perceived by the participants. As such the similarities are based on the most significant positive questionnaire responses (strongly agree/agree). Of the twenty-one questions in the questionnaire, despite somewhat different objectives, both case study organisations reported eight similar responses. The first similarity clearly shows that the team building programmes were well received by both client groups. As this was an a priori objective for both of the organisations, both training and development managers were delighted that this objective had been met.

Whilst both organisation design briefs had slightly different expectations of the team building activities, the same figure (76%) agreed that the activities had positively impacted on their workplace. Several of the interviewees attributed this positive impact on the workplace to enhanced interpersonal skills, specifically those related to communication and better understanding their colleagues. This finding is in line with Greenberg and Baron (2008)
who state that communication is essential to the development of interpersonal relationships. In addition, Robbins et al. (2008) state that “recognition of developing managers’ interpersonal skills is also closely tied to the need for organisations to get and keep high-performing employees” (p. 4). While both training and development managers commented on the importance placed by their respective organisations on the value of enhancing/increasing interpersonal relationship skills, the FizzCo organisational development manager explicitly referred to the value the company places on identifying and retaining high performers within the company.

As noted earlier in this thesis the questions regarding organisational commitment were included due in part to Benson’s (2006) observation that employers providing development opportunities are viewed more positively by their employees and this is reciprocated by increased commitment to the organisation. Whilst slightly less than 50% of participants across both organisations agreed they felt more committed to their organisation and less likely to leave in the near future, the majority (72% DiggerCo & 71% FizzCo) of the participants were more likely to talk positively about the organisation outside of the workplace as a result of the team building activities. It is interesting that the DiggerCo and FizzCo results are almost identical and, as noted in the findings for FizzCo, a possible reason for this is that the employees were not willing to give a definitive answer to this particular question, but indicated their commitment by the extremely positive responses to the following two questions. The researcher was present for both team building days, and had the opportunity to speak to some of the participants, the comments being made about both organisations were very positive. These positive comments were also expressed in the personal interviews and therefore it seems entirely feasible to assume that this reasoning may not be too far off the mark.
‘Feeling more like part of the family’ was an underlying aim for DiggerCo and was expressed as part of the overall programme via incorporating the company values and recently introduced new company theme; ‘clean green team’ and was reflected in both the qualitative and personal interview comments. FizzCo team building programme was based around the high performance team and their personal development, however it did incorporate the company’s core values and overall brand theme. ‘Feeling more like a part of the family’ found support from the FizzCo interviewees, who referred to the ‘family’ as the overall company, and the majority of the qualitative comments also made reference to the company as a whole recognising the high performance team by investing in their on-going development.

The final similarity which provided an interesting finding was the majority of participants (80% DiggerCo & 76% FizzCo) felt that the team building activities were of benefit to their respective organisations. The personal interviews along with the qualitative comments were reasonably unanimous in their reasoning for this; the opportunity to develop interpersonal relationships. This is a positive finding for both organisations as increasing and/or enhancing interpersonal skills according to Greenberg and Baron (2008) contributes to organisational effectiveness and, as noted in the introduction, the purpose of utilising organisation development techniques such as team building is to “improve organisational effectiveness and employee well-being” (Robbins, et al., p. 657). This finding therefore adds weight to the value of utilising these types of team building activities as part of an overall employee development programme, particularly when the focus is on interpersonal skills and developing a sense of belonging.
5.5 Cross case analysis 2 - Differences strongly agree/agree

As with the similarities, the differences also produced interesting results. As earlier noted the design brief for FizzCo was based around the Johari Window model involving personal development. 83% of the participants from FizzCo felt that the activities were personally worthwhile and this is a positive outcome for FizzCo. The design brief for DiggerCo had a slightly different focus, and this may be one of the reasons for just over half of the participants feeling they had gained personally from the team building activities. There are a number of possible reasons for this. One may be the fact that the question regarding the activities being personally worthwhile was asked at the start of the questionnaire. Support for this line of thought is perhaps best explained by comments made by two of the interviewees. As the interview with the researcher progressed, and the interviewees reflected back on the activities, they were surprised at what they recalled, one noted; “…as I said, if you had asked me on the day, I would probably not have even thought... I mean like looking for the underlying stuff”. The other interviewee noted that; I am thinking of several things now that I have been talking with you, I didn’t put that in the questionnaire either…hmmm…in fact I will
probably think of some more stuff when you hang up”. Though neither was referring specifically to this question, it may be that this question would have been better placed at the end of the questionnaire, by which time some participants would have perhaps had more time to reflect on the activities as they worked their way through the questionnaire. However, despite the possible shortcomings in the way the questionnaire was structured, the overall results are still a worthwhile finding for both of the organisations, and does tend to provide support for incorporating team building activities into the organisations’ overall training and development programmes.

In complete contrast to FizzCo, of the twenty-five respondents from DiggerCo seventeen neither agreed nor disagreed that they felt more motivated at work, with only three agreeing they felt more motivated, and a total of five disagreeing altogether. The personal interviews did shed some light on possible reasons for this result, one of which was the fact that the DiggerCo two day conference was business based and the team building activities were designed predominantly to encourage interpersonal relationships. In contrast, FizzCo two day programme largely focused on personal development. The fact that the DiggerCo participants neither agreed nor disagreed does not however indicate that they are less motivated at work as a result of the team building activities, but rather it is perhaps a reflection on their overall thoughts of the team building. It was fun, it was great to meet and get to know colleagues and so on, but in their opinion this does not necessarily translate to increased levels of motivation. The interviews with the FizzCo participants also helped explain reasons for the discrepancy in the questionnaire results. The FizzCo team building programme was based around on-going personal development stemming from the company recognising and acknowledging an elite group of high performers which in turn further inspired and motivated those particular individuals upon returning to their respective workplaces.
Although there was a difference in opinion regarding the level of trust and confidence in colleagues, both organisations did show a positive response. DiggerCo indicated 52% strongly agreeing/agreeing, and FizzCo showed 83%. FizzCo participants spent a substantial amount of time together over the two day period engaging in activities that helped them identify their strengths, communication and leadership skills, and learning more about their colleagues which may have lead the majority of respondents to agree they had developed an increased level of trust and confidence in their colleagues. Conversely, DiggerCo did not engage in as many group activities during their two day programme other than the actual team building activities. DiggerCo however did show a significant positive response to enhanced communication and better understanding of colleagues. A possible reason for this may be that the duration of the team building was perhaps a little brief to support the development of trust and confidence.

Goal setting was discussed by FizzCo, but not covered in depth with DiggerCo, other than short term goals in regard to the team building activities. Therefore, the discrepancy in results is again not entirely unexpected. However, what is of interest is the eight from DiggerCo and the eleven from FizzCo that agreed the activities had motivated them to set goals that would assist them in their workplace performance, which shows that at least some of the participants gained additional benefits from the team building activities.

Both organisations showed a slightly reduced figure when asked if they felt better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of participation in the team building activities. Seven participants from DiggerCo and nine from FizzCo strongly agreed/agreed with this statement. This may be attributed to the fact that the questionnaires and personal interviews took place four weeks after the team building activities and while there may be several reasons for this,
including perhaps the most obvious, the participants simply did not wish to. However, assuming a more positive stance, perhaps not enough time had elapsed for the participants to commit to stating that they were in a position to achieve workplace goals. Alternatively, the participants may have not yet had time to set specific workplace goals.

Identifying and evaluating, along with implementing and resolving, problems were the final two areas of difference between the two case study companies. FizzCo registered a much higher positive response to both questions with 53% and 65% respectively. DiggerCo in contrast indicated 24% and 36% respectively to the questions. Both organisations elicited a higher positive response rate in relation to feeling better equipped to implement and resolve than they did in respect to identification and evaluation of problems in their workplace. One of the managers from DiggerCo provided a clue as to why this may be so. The manager noted that problems are often identified by those working at the ‘coalface’, it is then up to the managers responsible for that particular contract to provide solutions and ensure they are successfully implemented.
5.6 Cross case analysis summary

Key insights

The key findings indicate that participants from both case study organisations perceived the development of interpersonal skills as being one of the key organisational benefits resulting from the team building activities. Mazany’s (1995) definition of team building as an “investment in the people resource of an organisation” (p. 51) therefore seems entirely appropriate when benefits such as these are found as a result of team building. The benefit of developing and/or enhancing interpersonal relationships is supported by Greenberg and Baron (2008), who state team building activities that provide opportunities for participants to successfully develop interpersonal skills can then enable the participants to influence each other’s potential upon returning to the workplace, with the overall aim of improving organisational effectiveness.

Incorporating an element of fun was also important to keeping the participants engaged. This was indicated by the high percentage of participants who agreed they had enjoyed the team building activities. Rosenberg (2007), cited earlier, stated that one of the main criticisms of team building activities is that they are more about playing games than they are about altering behaviour observing that while they can be “fun and engaging” (p. 26) the team building activities often “do not have the desired effect when everyone returns to the office” (p.26). The findings in this research do not appear to support Rosenberg’s (2007) observation. The questionnaire responses and the personal interviews were undertaken four weeks after the team building and the participants and the managers responsible for training and development within their respective organisations have in fact, indicated a number of organisational
benefits being accrued as a result of engaging in the team building activities. This was particularly evident in the findings from FizzCo, indicating that, as a result of the team building activities, the participants felt better able to set goals that would enhance their workplace performance, they were more likely to approach their colleagues for help, advice or mentoring. In addition, the participants also noted that their communication skills had improved. The participants from DiggerCo, while not so effusive in their responses, did however note that, overall, the development of interpersonal relationships was important to their business. They also felt that the team building activities had had an overall positive impact on their workplace and, whilst not as significant, the participants’ ability to implement and resolve problems had also increased. As with DiggerCo, the participants from FizzCo also felt more like a part of the family, and were also more likely to speak positively about their company outside of their workplace.

Many of the participants also commented on the facilitator’s skills as being important to the overall enjoyment of the programme. Both the managers responsible for training and development also noted in their interviews the importance they placed on the role of the external facilitator. Both made the observation that including an element of fun in the activities helped to create initial buy-in and this was seen as crucial to keeping the participants engaged and therefore more open to the overall goals of the team building programme. Without an element of fun, both managers agreed that achieving the desired outcomes would have been made difficult. The two training and development managers also agreed that the design brief objective of incorporating an element of fun had been well and truly met. This finding was further supported by comments in the final section of the questionnaire which asked participants to describe their initial reactions to team building. Whilst FizzCo resulted in more positive comments overall, DiggerCo showed a more significant change in
post-event attitudes, with several participants saying they had enjoyed themselves and as a result were more open to the idea of participating in team building activities in the future.

Finally, the observation of DiggerCo resulted in the researcher being able to clearly identify four of the five stages of Tuckman’s model. This process was initiated by the use of the ice-breaker activities which then led to groups forming and connecting with other relatively quickly. While the stages were also observed in the groups from FizzCo, it was more evident with the groups from DiggerCo. The training manager from DiggerCo commented to the researcher that this quick development of “team spirit” would not have been as easily achieved had the overall programmes been undertaken in a less interactive manner. In addition, the DiggerCo training manager saw this as an added bonus, as it enabled the groups to bond and therefore more quickly engage in the activities. This is not only a valuable finding for DiggerCo in particular, it also provides some measure of justification for incorporating team building activities into their organisational training and development programmes. In addition, it may be of some value to companies wishing to accelerate the process of better getting to know colleagues, and improving/enhancing communication skills.
6. Discussion

6.1 Research problem

This research began with the overall title of ‘team building - adding value or variety?’ The reason for this was the researcher’s interest in what, if any, organisational benefits would result from the use of team building activities such as those used in the two case studies in this research. Specifically, the researcher was interested in the participants’ and the training and development managers’ perceptions of the team building activities and whether or not they were able to identify any organisational benefits as a result of participating in the activities. Thus the research considered the question; “What, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities” as perceived by the participants and training and development managers.

6.2 Key findings

This chapter discusses the overall findings from both case study organisations and how they relate back to the research question. While both organisations had slightly different design brief objectives, the main focus for both was predominantly the development of interpersonal relationship skills. The results show that this objective was achieved by both organisations and this finding was also fully endorsed by both of the managers responsible for training and development within their respective organisations. Shivers-Blackwell (2004) provides support for this finding, suggesting that team building activities can be beneficial in “developing interpersonal skills, such as communication among team members” (p. 614). The benefits to an organisation resulting from the acquisition of interpersonal skills have been well
documented by academics such as Greenberg and Baron (2008), who note the importance of increasing/enhancing interpersonal relationships as making a valuable contribution to an organisation’s overall effectiveness. The final results however do not support Rosenberg’s (2007) contention that acquiring such skills also enables participants to create a more productive workplace. The results from DiggerCo and FizzCo indicate that very few participants felt that their workplace had become more productive as a result of the team building activities.

Although the team building activities did not, in the view of the participants, result in a more productive workplace, participants from both organisations did agree that the team building activities had a positive impact on their workplace as a whole. The personal interviewees’ comments indicated that getting to know and understand their colleagues in particular had in turn led to better communication which was the main reason for the positive impact on their respective workplaces. FizzCo interviewees also noted that enhanced trust and confidence had led the participants to feel more comfortable asking colleagues for help or advice, which also contributed to a positive workplace. DiggerCo registered a much lower positive response than FizzCo in terms of increased trust and understanding. It is difficult to tell whether this result may have been improved should the activities have been longer in duration and/or included activities that were specifically aimed at building trust and confidence.

While the team building activities for both organisations did incorporate an element of problem solving, the metaphor of workplace problem solving may not have been as clear to the participants from DiggerCo. The overall results regarding increased or enhanced problem solving skills being developed as a result of the team building activities proved to be inconclusive in terms of showing any significant difference in problem solving skills.
24% felt better able to identify and evaluate problems, only slightly more (36%) of the participants agreed that they felt better able to implement and resolve problems. One reason for the less than positive responses in the problem solving section of the questionnaire was provided by one of the interviewees who noted that in their industry it was often the supervisors working at the ‘coalface’ who identified problems. If they were not able to find a suitable solution, the problem was brought to the attention of the manager responsible for that particular area. A possible implication of this comment is that perhaps the managers felt that their problem solving skills were sufficiently developed. In contrast, FizzCo results showed a more significant response in reply to the same questions. 53% felt better able to identify and evaluate problems and although 47% neither agreed nor disagreed, 65% felt better able to implement and resolve problems in the workplace as a result of the team building activities. While feedback was sought by the facilitator regarding the challenges of working together on some of the problem solving activities for both organisations, the metaphors while acknowledged do not appear to have translated to any appreciable difference back in the workplace for DiggerCo. However, FizzCo participants do appear to have found some benefit in the problem solving activities.

The key finding revealed in the results of this study was the overall positiveness generated by participating in the team building activities. While this is not an organisational benefit in itself, it was seen by the participants as being very important to the overall success of the team building activities. This in turn allowed the participants to enjoy themselves in a relaxed, fun environment, and as a result the participants were able to develop interpersonal relationship skills by working on their communication skills, getting to know and understand one another, and, to some degree, develop a sense of trust and confidence in their colleagues.
Contributing to this overall positive feeling was the role played by the external facilitator. This is supported by all of the interviewees and both training and development managers who acknowledged how important the facilitator had been in ensuring the activities were entertaining and engaging. This was attributed to the facilitator keeping the participants fully engaged by bringing a sense of energy and passion to the proceedings, without which, as one of the interviewees noted, the day would have been “boring”. The findings support the training and development managers’ decision to employ an external facilitator, and also concur with Priest and Gass (1997), Wheelan (2005), and others, who note the importance of using a facilitator who has sufficient knowledge and experience to design a team building programme that is suited to the client’s unique needs. These findings do not support Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) who suggest that team building activities are ineffective for a number of reasons, the main one being the use of an external facilitator. This they say, is due to their unfamiliarity with the organisation. The positive comments regarding the use of an external facilitator were a result of utilising a facilitator who bought a sense of passion and fun to the proceedings, along with a clearly designed brief that outlined the company’s key objectives and expected outcomes, which were developed in conjunction with both the client and the facilitator. These factors resulted in activities that met the overall aims of both programmes and were well received by the participants. Mealiea and Baltazar (2005) also cautioned against undertaking team building activities off-site, as there was no value to be gained from working in an environment that bears no relationship to the workplace. However, the comments from the participants and the training and development managers differ from Mealiea and Baltazar’s (2005) suggestions. In both cases, the activities were undertaken away from the workplace and this was seen as a good thing by the participants and the training and development managers. Indicative of the overall feelings regarding the team building activities being undertaken off-site was the comment made by the organisational development
manager from FizzCo who stated that it was good to “just get away from the pressures of the workplace and have some fun”.

This research adopted a case study approach and by its very nature relies heavily on subjective rather than objective data. However, the data collected via the observations, questionnaires, personal interviews and design briefs pointed to the participants feeling more like a part of the family, and more likely to speak positively about their respective organisations outside of their workplaces. While the majority of participants adopted a neutral stance in indicating they were more likely to remain with the company, the positive responses noted above nevertheless do demonstrate a commitment to the organisation. Employee attitudes as noted by Boshoff and Mels (2000) are important to an organisation as they can erode or enhance a company’s reputation. As both of these companies have a high public profile, this is a significant and very positive outcome for them.

Salas et al. (1999) state that while team building is “still an extremely popular and common intervention” (p. 309) much of the team building literature reviewed for their meta-analysis showed “mixed, vague or non-significant results” (p. 309). Salas et al. (1999) concluded that there was an overall lack of beneficial effects resulting from the use of team building activities. However, Salas et al. (1999) did go on to state that “further research is needed to examine other conditions under which team building may be more effective” (p. 324).

One of the conditions that contributed to the overall effectiveness of the team building activities in this study was the fact that the activities were designed specifically to reflect the needs of the organisation and were enjoyable, as specified in the design briefs. The importance of designing a programme that is suited to each client’s unique needs is noted by
Priest and Gass (1997). Including an element of competitiveness reflected the nature of the industry within which DiggerCo operates and the data gathered from the participants in this study indicated that the team building activities were particularly well received because of this. The design brief for FizzCo was to support the overall aims of the high performance leadership programme with a focus on personal development. From the ice breaker activities that encouraged disclosure of some personal details through to the ‘secret buddy’ observations, the activities all provided opportunities for the participants to get to know one another on a more personal basis, work on their communication skills, and overall self-awareness.

Another condition for the overall success of the team building activities was the fact that the participants were alike, that is, they held similar views toward their organisation. This contributed to an overall sense of commitment by the participants toward their respective organisations. The combined results showed an overwhelmingly positive response to ‘feeling more like a part of the family’, and ‘being more likely to speak positively about their organisation outside of their workplace’. The interviewees from FizzCo stated that it was their opinion that being included in a group of like-minded people really made a difference in the way they approached the activities. They were there to work on self-development, and as a result were focused on getting as much out of the activities as they could. Their views were also supported by the majority of qualitative comments made in the questionnaire. In addition, FizzCo participants also expressed their satisfaction in being recognised by their organisation as being special and worthy of development. The participants from DiggerCo, while not as effusive in their descriptions of being recognised by the company, still expressed a commitment to the organisation through their overwhelmingly positive response to the questions regarding ‘feeling more like a part of the family’, and being ‘more likely to speak
positively about their organisation outside of their workplace’. These findings are in line with Meyer and Smith (2000), Bartlett, (2001), Tansky and Cohen (2001) and Benson (2006) who note that employee satisfaction with development opportunities in general is positively related to organisational commitment. Benson (2006) also notes that employees who are satisfied with development opportunities are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes toward their organisation. Conversely, Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) note the absence of commitment can reduce organisational effectiveness. Team building falls within the realm of organisational development which is concerned with enhancing organisational effectiveness and employee well-being. Therefore, it can be said that in this study, the team building activities contributed to the participants exhibiting positive attitudes toward their respective organisations, which in turn, according to the literature contributes to organisational effectiveness and employee well-being.
7. Conclusion

This research has identified several organisational benefits stemming from the use of team building activities that are metaphorically analogous to the workplace. Specifically, it appears that overall the team building activities were instrumental in the further development of interpersonal skills, particularly, communication and better understanding of colleagues. Commitment to their respective organisations was demonstrated by the participants in the form of being more likely to speak positively about the organisation outside of their workplace. The majority of participants also said they felt more like a part of the family as a result of the team building activities. These are the key benefits as identified by the participants and certainly provide support in justifying the inclusion of the team building activities in to the overall training and development programmes run by DiggerCo and FizzCo.

While the FizzCo interviewees were adamant their opinions regarding perceived benefits were solely based on the team building activities, this researcher believes, that their perceptions were in part, due to a combination of factors. Being recognised as part of an elite high performance team, the team building activities being used in support of an overall leadership and personal development programme and the fact that the 21 participants spent a considerable amount of time working closely together, all contributed to the FizzCo participants’ overall positive perceptions. DiggerCo on the other hand, while not showing any significant results in increased/and or enhanced trust and confidence, did nevertheless, show distinct similarities in several areas to FizzCo, specifically, communication, increased/enhanced understanding of colleagues. In summary, the results of the questionnaires, interviews, and observations indicate that the development of interpersonal relationships were
perceived by both case study participants as being the most significant in terms of organisational benefits resulting from the team building activities.

The success of any team building programme relies on the participating individual’s perceptions. That is, the structure of the programme and how it is delivered will all inform people’s overall perceptions of the programme. Whilst having fun led the participants to agree they had enjoyed the activities, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive responses to the questionnaires, having fun is not a direct organisational benefit. However, had the activities not been entertaining, the participants, and some by their own admission, would not have actively engaged in the team building activities. It could therefore be inferred that team building activities including an element of entertainment are more likely to result in the participants being more willing to engage in the activities, which then provides an opportunity for the underlying objectives of the team building to be introduced via interactive activities.

The differences between the two case study organisations reflect to some degree the different programmes in which the team building activities took place. The two day programme for FizzCo was based on personal development and the team building activities were designed to support this. In contrast, DiggerCo two day programme was business development and the training manager wished to provide an opportunity for the ‘lads’ to get out of the classroom, meet and get to know their colleagues better, recognise the complexities of teamwork, and have some fun. The differences therefore could be said to accurately reflect the expected outcomes of each of the case study organisations.

Rosenberg (2007) notes that one of the main criticisms of team building is that the programmes are often more about playing games than they are about changing behaviour, and
that while the activities can be “fun and engaging often they do not have the desired effect when everyone returns to the office” (p. 26). In terms of this research, while the participants clearly did have fun, and the activities were engaging, the results of the data collected four weeks after the team building activities, as perceived by the participants and the training and development managers, do in fact point to distinct organisational benefits being accrued to both organisations.

Therefore, in answer to the research question, it appears there are definite organisational benefits, as perceived by the participants, accrued through the use of team building activities such as those utilised in this study. In conclusion, and returning to the title of this research; *Team building - adding value or variety?*, the results of the two case studies show that the inclusion of team building activities for both organisations’ overall training and development programmes not only added variety, but resulted in definite value for both the participants and the organisations themselves. Therefore, it could be said that, in fact there is value in adding variety.

### 7.1 Limitations

Research into team building is difficult due in part to the vast array of team building activities available, which in turn has spurned an equally vast array of literature. The main problem for this study lay in endeavouring to first define team building and this was further complicated by the term ‘team building’ being used to describe widely dissimilar activities. Added to this, is the lack of rigorous research into the benefits or lack thereof of utilising team building activities such as those used in this study. Therefore a limitation of this study is that it investigates only one kind of teambuilding activity in a wide field of possible alternatives.
Another potential limitation identified at the start of this research process was the possibility that the interviewees may not have been entirely forthcoming in their responses. However the interview and questionnaire findings were found to be consistent. The interviewees had no reason to be anything but open and honest as the interviews were entirely anonymous. The interviews were also deliberately semi-structured in order to provide a non-formal interview environment, it was hoped that this would put the interviewees at ease and provide a more conducive environment in which they could share their real opinions. The researcher does however acknowledge that some of the interview respondents may have been influenced by social desirability bias and recorded more positive responses as a result.

### 7.2 Recommendations for future research

The team building activities that formed the basis of the two case studies are far removed from what many people may consider to be ‘team building’ in the traditional sense. During the preliminary research for this thesis, the researcher was surprised to find that whilst there is still a market for the more traditional team building activities such as ‘outward bound’ type courses, there has been a gradual shift to more creative, innovative activities that do not require a great deal of physical strength and can be undertaken in almost any location either in or outdoors. There has been little if in fact any recent research undertaken in New Zealand on this emerging trend. Therefore there is an opportunity for further research into the use of such activities that are designed to reflect workplace issues and the role a facilitator plays in the overall success of such team building activities. As this study has shown, these activities add not only value but also variety and as such a possibility exists for research into the use of team building activities as used in this study to be incorporated in to overall employee development initiatives as opposed to being used as one-off events.
Finally, if this study was to be replicated, it would be worthwhile doing so with two control groups. This would allow for participant perceptions to be more clearly evaluated in terms of the perceived benefits of team building activities. Further study into the effects of team building activities is important, it is a common and popular organisational development tool, but it is often used without any clear reason as to why it is being undertaken, or what outcomes are expected as a result. No wonder the benefits of team building are described as being somewhat vague and ill-defined.


Sunday Star Times Magazine, 2008, September 7, P.8


Appendix A - Team Building Questionnaire

Survey questionnaire

“What, if any, are the organisational benefits of team building activities?”

Instructions - please read carefully.

I am an independent researcher conducting research on the benefits of team building for my Master of Business degree thesis. Your opinions regarding the team building activities at Huntly (September 15-16) will be very helpful to my research. Your responses will be kept confidential and you will not be personally identified in this study. It should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer as many questions as you are able to as accurately and honestly as you can. If you complete this questionnaire as an electronic copy, please save your copy, and then return it as an attachment to the email address below. If you would prefer to print out and complete, please send the completed questionnaire to the address below.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.
Principal Researcher -Deb Cresswell - Email: oldrocka@hotmail.com

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2008.863

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 July 2008 to 15 July 2009. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Section 1:

Please answer all of this section by typing/writing an ‘X’ in the appropriate boxes.

Gender:  □  Male  □  Female
Age:  □  18-25  □  26-35  □  36-45  □  46 and over

Length of time employed by this organisation:

□  1 yr or less  □  1-3 years  □  3-5 years
□  5-7 years  □  7+ years

Highest level of education: high school certificate, polytechnic, university qualification (diploma, certificate, degree) post-graduate qualification.

__________________________________________

Current position in company:

□  Senior Management  □  Management  □  Non- Management
## Section 2:

Thinking about your recent team building activities, please indicate your response by typing/writing an ‘X’ in the column that is most appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Overall I enjoyed participating in the team building activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please briefly explain your response:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Overall the team building activities were worthwhile to me personally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel my workplace environment is more fun to work in as a result of the team building activities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel more motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel more de-motivated at work as a result of the team building activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The team building activities will help improve my job performance now and in the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Overall, I feel that the team building activities had a positive impact on my workplace as a whole.

8. Thinking about the team building activities, what in your opinion was particularly beneficial in terms of improving overall workplace performance?

| Section 3: |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 9 | I feel that I am better able to communicate with other members of my team as a result of the team building activities. |
| 10 | Compared with before the team building activities, my level of trust and confidence in my colleagues has increased. |
| 11 | I feel that I better understand my colleagues as a result of the team building activities. |
### Section 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. As a result of the team building activities I feel more committed to the organisation and I am less likely to leave in the near future.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. As a result of the team building activities I feel better about the organisation and am more likely to talk positively about it outside of my workplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. As a result of the team building activities I now feel like a ‘part of the family’ in my organisation.</td>
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### Section 5:

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. I feel the team building activities motivated me to set goals that will assist me in my workplace performance.</td>
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<td>16. I feel better able to achieve workplace goals as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<td>17. Compared with before the team building activities, my workplace has become more productive.</td>
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### Section 6:

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I am better able to <em>identify and evaluate</em> problems in my job as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I am better equipped to <em>implement and resolve</em> solutions to problems in my workplace as a result of the team building activities.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Overall, do you feel that the team building activities have been beneficial to your organisation?</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>If so, please briefly explain:</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Please describe your initial reaction when you first heard that you would be participating in team building activities?</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Referring to question 22, has your attitude towards team building activities changed? Please briefly explain your response:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. To begin with could you tell me about your thoughts on the team building activities you participated in at Huntly.

2. Reflecting on the team building activities, do you think there it was a worthwhile experience from your perspective? For the organisation?

3. What, if any, benefits were accrued to the organisation as a result of the team building activities?

4. Are you aware of what others thought about the team building activities? i.e. awareness of others perceptions/ others discussing it?

5. As a result of the team building, do you think communication between your colleagues and yourself has changed? How/why?

6. In terms of interpersonal relationships, do you think there has been any change as a result of the team building activities? (how well you get on/understand your colleagues).

7. Has your level of commitment to the organisation changed as a result of the team building activities?
8. In general, do you feel that you have benefited personally from engaging in the team building activities? How/why?

9. What are your thoughts on the overall facilitation of the team building activities?

10. Finally, do you have any comments or observations to add?
Appendix C - Training Manager’s Interview Schedule

Training/Development Manager’s Personal Interview Schedule

Could you tell me about your observations/thoughts regarding the team building activities? (including any feedback)

Could you summarise the overall purpose of the team building activities?

According to the literature, team building falls within the realm of organisational development which is primarily concerned with improving/enhancing organisational effectiveness and overall employee well-being. What are your thoughts on this in relation to using team building?

What in your opinion are the benefits of employing this type of team building to your organisation?

In your opinion, how useful were the team building activities in terms of achieving the overall objectives and aims as per the design brief?

Do you think there were other ancillary benefits gained as a result of participation in the team building activities?

Would you use these types of activities as a part of your overall training and development initiatives again? Why?