Doing the Math

“One plus one equals three” reflects our belief that people working together can create far greater outcomes than the sum of their individual efforts.

Synergy Learning Systems is a team of dedicated individuals who believe that organizations can become vibrant, conscious, fun, productive, effective, socially responsible and wildly successful. We create experiences to facilitate the dynamic movement of groups toward these goals, using innovative experiential team and leadership development programs and services with a focus on adventure, creativity, reflection and technology.

Our Goals

• Help organizations move toward their desired future
• Increase individual, team, and organizational productivity and effectiveness
• Create sustainable teams that grow and flourish
• Evoke meaningful conversations that create change
• Enable individuals to see themselves, others, and their world differently

Our Focus

We believe in the value of serious play. Active learning is not about lectures and arcane theories. It might be a day together climbing cables and ropes to unite a team, a virtual mountain climb, or crafting guiding principles to weather change. It could be an organizational simulation creating art, making movies or building bikes for kids in need. It might be an afternoon or a few days in a conference room, working with your organization developing team and leadership skills or exploring fresh strategies. We partner with you to create a program or workshop that provides powerful opportunities for self-discovery, team and organizational learning, and improved productivity and effectiveness.

What Makes Synergy Different?

Synergy programs feature hands-on learning, adventure, creativity, and reflection. We utilize technology when appropriate, to “up the ante” and increase the challenge. Research shows that adults learn by experiencing, analyzing their experience, and applying this reflection to their everyday work life. Our programs and workshops place people in environments and situations that require stretching one's abilities, using mental and physical challenges that lead to enhanced awareness, quality dialogue and improved decision making and processes.

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Action Steps™ Overview

Action Steps is a program that incorporates a variety of learning activities. Each program is custom designed to meet the goals and objectives of individual clients. The purpose of ActionSteps™ is for participants to experience the difficulties of solving complex problems in a team situation. Our consultants guide development of “action steps” for applying the learnings in the work environment.

Who Benefits

• Meetings that need an energizing and engaging activity that brings people together
• Teams who would like to work on communication to enable them to take on challenges more effectively
• Cross departments that are having difficulties working together and are “silod”
• Groups that need an increase in familiarity and “ice breaking”

How Action Steps Works

Programs begin with a brief group discussion of the critical factors for a high performing team. After the discussion the group moves outside to focus on these critical factors and to have an opportunity to practice skill building through a series of creative and engaging problem solving activities.

The Experiential Learning model provides the framework for the activities:

ACT: Experiential learning takes observable behavior—what someone said or did—as the basis of the lessons to be learned.

REFLECT: People learn lessons that stick when they consciously explore the results of their actions as well as their reasons for doing what they did.

REFRAME: Once people gain insight into their actions, they are able to change fundamental ways of thinking that keep them from achieving the results they want.

APPLY: Learning is contextual; understanding when and how to apply new learning in the workplace is the crucial last step of the cycle.

We integrate applicable cognitive models (Tuckman’s Group Development Model and William Bridges’ and Jim Ewing’s Change Model) and facilitated group discussion sessions in all of our programs.

Each program ends with a group discussion on key learnings and an action planning session that helps to ensure that the learnings are applied. This program takes approximately 4 hours with debrief.

Learning Outcomes

• Understand the value of collaborating across teams; identify opportunities
• Practice creative problem-solving skills in a team environment
• Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence
• Reconnect and align your team toward a common goal

Clients Say

“The Synergy team facilitated an Action Steps program for our senior leadership program. The exercises were dynamic, interesting, fun and sophisticated and, with Synergy’s skillful and insightful facilitation, significantly helped my team forward in their teaming skills.”

—Roy Stansbury
Senior VP, CapGemini
AdVision™ Overview

AdVision™ is a powerful opportunity for your team to practice and expand their skills in cross-team communication, delivering a unified message and meeting tight deadlines. In AdVision™, your group creates original, inventive ad copy and video that visually demonstrate the creative power of collaborative minds.

How AdVision™ Works

In just a few hours, your group writes, acts, films and helps to edit their own commercials. Digital camcorders, props and a professional editor are provided. Your group becomes one Production Company tasked with creating a campaign of three 60-second commercials that target a specific market segment.

• Each Production Company divides into three production teams.
• Each Production Company devises their product name, features and benefits and value proposition within the assigned category (software, pharmaceuticals, etc.). The categories are customized based on the client’s objectives.
• Each Production Team creates one commercial to target different market segments, keeping in mind the need for a cohesive branding message for the campaign. (We design market segments representative of your clientele, but not too similar, to access creativity and generate fun.)
• Production Teams create and deliver a brief marketing presentation before showing their ads at the First Annual AdVision™ Competition.
• Teams are judged on:
  • Integrated branding: Cohesive branding throughout the campaign
  • Creativity: Product, set design, best use of phrase, writing, acting, and editing
  • Presentation: Most creative marketing pitch

The end result? An energetic, productive and unforgettable learning experience that boosts your team’s ability to communicate and to work across boundaries to deliver a product to market.

Learning Outcomes

• Identify opportunities to collaborate across teams
• Practice creative problem-solving skills as a team
• Reconnect and align your team toward a common goal
• Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence
• Unleash your team’s creativity

Clients Say

“We’ve been working with Synergy for over seven years and have used many of their simulations and activities with our executives. All of their programs are quite good and insightful, but AdVision stands out as the best. It engaged our teams in discussing mission-critical issues such as customer value propositions, vision and role clarity; and it was done in a very interactive environment. We still refer to it as a milestone in our company’s evolution.”

—Mike Dresner, VP of Sales, Athena Diagnostics

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**BigPicture™ Overview**

Aligning people in an organization toward a unified strategic intent is a question companies face every day. BigPicture™ simulation opens participants’ perceptions and demonstrates the need for strategic and operational alignment among functional areas, a must in capturing opportunities in today’s marketplace. BigPicture™ addresses collaboration across teams, the roles of leadership and vision, and the importance of flexible thinking to meet changing customer expectations and markets.

**Who Benefits**

- Production teams that must work together to deliver a product
- Organizations that must strategically unify
- Cross departments that are having difficulties working together and are “siloed”
- Teams that must interpret and execute complex and seemingly competing customer requirements

**How BigPicture™ Works**

In just a few hours, the BigPicture™ simulation engages a group to design, paint, color and assemble a mural. The goal is to enlarge pieces of a picture into a wall-sized mural that meets customer requirements. Participants are divided into regional groups representing production work teams, a management team and customers. Work teams are concerned with resolving issues of interdependencies regarding color, texture, scale, customer needs, costs and time to market. Managers drive their teams to meet milestones, ship dates and budgets, and to take ownership of the final product. Everyone has what they need to succeed, as long as they focus on the critical objectives and processes that create the BIG picture.

Despite detailed instructions, participants often do not immediately see what is necessary for success. Once teams are redirected to focus on what is important to accomplish the vision, frustration turns into coordinated action and productivity takes a quantum leap. The lessons learned are burned into the minds of the participants—they are now ready to apply these new insights into their own work practices.

**Learning Outcomes**

- Realize the need for organizational alignment
- Identify opportunities for horizontal communication
- Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence
- Highlight the importance of customer orientation

**Clients Say**

“The team building event was a huge success . . . The activity helped us to take a step back and reflect on our own organization and the ways we could improve going forward. I would like to thank you personally for the effort you and your team put into this.”

–Prateek Kothar, Cisco Systems
“What activity will best meld my team and inspire and motivate them for the challenges ahead?” Our answer: the Challenge Ropes Course, situated in an exceptionally beautiful setting in the redwoods at the Chaminade Conference Center in Santa Cruz, California. The Challenge Course functions as an outdoor learning lab in which individuals and teams learn and grow by reframing challenges into opportunities.

How Challenge Course™ Works

Our ropes course is designed to powerfully reflect the challenges groups face in working together: strategy, coaching, teamwork, goal setting, implementation and time pressures. Utilizing a real-life environment, a “fantastic jungle gym” in the trees, creates a remarkable natural metaphor for flexibility, adaptability and growth.

Participants explore new ways of responding to organizational challenges through activities and well-facilitated discussions. Seemingly unachievable tasks are accomplished and celebrated through team support, coaching, and focusing on desired goals.

Participation in the Challenge Course™ does not require special physical conditioning. Individuals freely decide how they can best participate, given their own desires and capabilities. The course consists of both low, ground-based events and high events that involve climbing while held securely via rope systems monitored by team members.

The experience is both physically and mentally inspiring. We often hear the words “teamwork,” “camaraderie,” “invigorating,” and “unforgettable” when participants talk about their Challenge Course experiences.

We work with you to design your day based on your team objectives, incorporating activities such as Spider Web, Balance Pole, and Giant’s Ladder to move your team through the stages of active learning.

The Giants Ladder is an awesome 8’ wide, 70’ high ladder suspended between two redwood trees, with rungs between 3 and 7 feet apart. The Ladder enables groups to practice planning, goal setting, and effective communication. Participants hold safety lines for the two or three climbers ascending the ladder at a time. Climbers achieve greater results by supporting each other and receiving coaching from teammates on the ground.

The Balance Pole is a 35’ tall pole with a round platform secured at the top. Participants set goals for themselves and accomplish much more than they dreamed, owing to support and coaching from their team on the ground. Many people are pleasantly surprised when they find themselves standing on top of the platform and jumping for a tether ball that is suspended a few feet away.

The Spider Web is a low activity in which teams are broken into smaller groups with the objective of passing people through holes in what looks like a giant spider’s web created by ropes and webbing. The more collaborative the small groups are, the more success they achieve—with obvious organizational parallels.

Learning Outcomes

- Build trust and strengthen commitment in new teams
- Explore the dynamics of risk taking and support
- Practice coaching, goal setting and decision-making skills

Clients Say

“Recently participated in the Synergy Challenge Course and to be honest, was initially against our organization engaging in this activity because it felt irrelevant. My experience couldn’t have been more different - it brought our team together in ways that I couldn’t imagine. It was a day well spent in advancing our team’s ability to work together to achieve difficult business objectives.”

~J. Petersen, Director, Major Software Company
The Circuit™ Overview

The Circuit™ is your choice when looking for a short, dynamic, energetic outdoor team building program to actively bring your group together. Participants challenge themselves and their teams to complete a series of trials. No boring, company-picnic activities here! Each challenge utilizes different skills and requires teams to evaluate their resources and coordinate a plan.

How The Circuit™ Works

We offer two broad frameworks for design and facilitation of your Circuit, depending on your learning outcomes:

- Competition – Variable points (or deductions) are received for each activity; teams compete against each other
- Learning Focus – Facilitated for collaboration, creativity, communication and leadership skills

Depending on your objectives, we mix and match options that echo your group’s challenges and reinforce desired learning outcomes. We design a blend of physical and mental challenges to accommodate all capabilities and learning styles inclusively.

Options feature energizing fun and a range of difficulty. A combination of the options will form a 2-4 hour Circuit challenge for your group; other options available on request.

Sample Challenges – and we have many more –

- SATELLITE DISC - Three bamboo posts are 20’ feet apart with 5 discs of different sizes on the first post. Move all 5 discs to the 3rd pole, in the same order following activity constraints.
- SHELTER BUILD - Construct a tent with your team. The challenge: only blindfolded team members can touch the materials.
- GET YOUR BEARINGS - Navigate your team on several different missions from point A to point D using magnetic compasses.
- THE LAUNCH - Build a catapult or trebuchet-type launcher from various provided materials, able to shoot an object within a target area.

Learning Outcomes

- Practice creative problem-solving skills as a team
- Apply adaptability, flexibility and collaboration
- Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence
- Effective communication and decision making
- High performance behaviors under pressure

Clients Say

“Synergy’s Team Circuit was a really fun and active way to bring our international and geographically dispersed team together. We got to know each other much better and walked away with a better idea of our strengths as a team.”

– Shawn Wiggins
Cisco Systems
Everest Overview:  
A Virtual Mountain Climb

Align your team behind a compelling mountain vision and a shared goal to advance to the next level. This critical skill assists in improving internal processes and overall performance in a changing environment.

Debrief and Business Application: Customized to your needs and goals, debrief can run from 15 minutes to several hours. Synergy’s trained facilitators integrate proven learning methods and support materials to enhance your team’s learning outcomes. Whether reaching the summit of Mt Everest, skiing remote peaks on all seven continents or overcoming a fear of heights, our presenters’ inspirational stories close your event with high energy.

Learning Outcomes
Participants gain valuable understanding of the elements needed to succeed at one of the greatest challenges on earth:

- Launch a compelling vision
- Align and engage multiple teams through shared principles and behaviors
- Build a strong culture that embraces diversity and social responsibility
- Increase leadership capabilities
- Utilize Team PACT – unite teams through Passion, Accountability, Commitment & Trust

Who Benefits
• Meetings that need an energizing and engaging activity to bring people together
• Groups that prioritize multiple activities and decide which will have the greatest return
• Teams that must quickly match skill with task to create maximum output

How Peak Teams’ Everest™ Works
The primary objective of Everest™ is to reach the summit of the world’s highest peak and return safely. Multiple teams come together as one expedition and journey to Base Camp and beyond, challenged to establish a set of Guiding Principles, appoint a leader and agree on a decision-making process (culture).

The expedition group agrees on a Guiding Company to hire for their expedition, and comes together in a powerful and compelling Sherpa Puja Ceremony to unite teams toward their common goal (alignment). Acclimatization requires stopping to look, listen and learn in order to “one plus one equals three” the team.

Clients Say
“We utilized Synergy’s Everest program, focusing on applying our core values to ensure team effectiveness, high quality decisions and organizational alignment. It made a difference in moving my organization forward toward continued success, and I recommend this program for any organization looking for a unique and engaging leadership development process.”

—Joe D’Alessandro, President & CEO
SF Convention & Visitors Bureau
The FilmFest™ Overview

Does life in your organization sometimes feel like a Hollywood movie? FilmFest™ is designed around the idea that team projects can feel as if we’re all responsible for making scenes for the same movie, yet we produce the scenes in isolation and expect them to edit together smoothly. Filmfest’s unique, creative and highly energetic team-building activity simulates and addresses this challenge. The stars are well known—they’re your team!

How FilmFest™ Works

In just a few hours, your group will write, act, shoot and edit their own short film. Divided into 3 production teams, each team films scenes for the same movie—in different locations, with team members in the roles of writers, actors, directors, editors and shooters.

Each production team writes and produces 2 non-consecutive scenes that are edited together with other teams’ scenes to create one short film. Participants coordinate efforts within and between production teams to ensure that the flow, direction and message of the overall film are consistent, while adding their own creative touches.

Teams are given a digital camcorder, props and a professional editor to assist in the final product. We provide skeleton or draft plots from various genres (horror, adventure, documentary, comedy) or groups can create their own. Each movie weaves in themes customized to your organizational goals and challenges.

There are roles for all the different personalities of your team. Don’t be surprised if a quiet team member suddenly flourishes in front of the camera!

The end result is an engaging, energized team learning experience that shows your team’s ability to communicate. At the completion, we host a Film Festival complete with Academy Awards. You will have an entertaining, high-quality DVD to commemorate the experience.

Learning Outcomes

• Understand the value of collaborating across teams; identify opportunities
• Practice creative problem-solving skills in a team environment
• Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence
• Reconnect and align your team toward a common goal
• Unleash and stimulate your team’s innate creativity

Clients Say

“Synergy’s FilmFest stands out as one of the best team building programs our organization has ever done, and we’ve done nearly everything. Writing, filming, acting and editing a movie is not really in our skill set, but this program proved that with commitment and momentum, together we can accomplish great things.”

–VP of Marketing
Cisco Systems
Geoteaming™ Overview

Utilizing the latest technology and building on people’s intrinsic need for fun and connectivity, Geoteaming™ immerses participants in an adventure requiring team skills and collaboration for success. The most effective teambuilding experiences offer experiential learning; with Geoteaming, it’s all hands on!

Who Benefits

• Meetings that need an energizing and engaging activity to bring people together
• Groups that prioritize multiple activities and decide which will have the greatest return
• Teams that must quickly match skill with task to create maximum output
• Groups that need an increase in familiarity and “ice breaking”

How Geoteaming™ Works

Geoteaming™ uses technology to create adventure for teams in both urban and rural settings. Geoteaming™ uses the gadgets people love to get their hands on: GPS receivers, Pocket PCs, 2-way radios and digital cameras. Based on the sport of Geocaching, teams are challenged to locate hidden containers worth various revenue amounts. Teams decipher visual and written clues to chart their course... then it’s up to them to design and execute a strategy to achieve their team and company goals.

Advanced Team Training Engages and Inspires

At Synergy, we believe that people are intrinsically smart and that they have more fun when they are challenged. Geoteaming™ works on this principle. The clues are ingenious, the goals challenging; success requires each person’s unique contribution. Not your parents’ goofy scavenger hunt, this high-tech learning adventure has direct application to your work environment, expertly highlighted by a trained facilitator in the final debrief.

Multiple options are available for customization, from designs that explore the importance and challenge of cross-team collaboration to designs for straight-out competition. We also offer designs based on the game of Clue. It is rumored that the next design includes iPhones, so stay tuned!

Learning Outcomes

• Develop your strategy “muscles”
• Understand the process of collaborating across teams and geographies
• Explore the importance of communication up, down and across teams and boundaries
• Practice effective planning and execution as a team

Clients Say

“What an eye-opening experience! It was amazing to see the group momentum shift from an individual team position of win-at-any-cost to one of collaboration and mindfulness of the entire company goal. It created a radical shift in our thinking that continues to affect how we approach our work.”

--Sid Jhaveri, Director of Global Quality Assurance, Starbucks
“Rising to the Challenge”…
Mt Everest keynote and workshop

Harnessing personal leadership and support teams to excel

*Rising to the Challenge* is the inspiring story of Rex Pemberton’s climb of Mt Everest at the age of 21.

Mixing storytelling with dramatic video, Rex takes the audience on a captivating journey that demonstrates the power of:

- **Compelling goals**
- **Self leadership built on passion, drive and commitment**
- **Strong support teams**

Before he could even step foot on Everest, Rex had to overcome the financial challenge of raising in excess of $100,000 from cynical sponsors. He faced numerous relationship challenges as he sought to find a team he could trust in such a demanding environment.

And then he faced the mental and physical challenges of training and preparing for something bigger than anything he had attempted before.

Not only did Rex overcome these challenges, he leveraged his success on Everest to become the third youngest person in the world to climb the Seven Summits – the highest summit on each continent.

Interactive Workshop on Self Leadership and Support Teams

To further engage the audience and enrich the learning experience, Rex has designed a diagnostic questionnaire that forms part of an interactive workshop on strengthening Self Leadership and Support Teams.

*Rising to the Challenge* can be delivered as a keynote presentation, workshop or as part of an integrated program of high impact learning.

Clients Say

“Rex? His keynote was simply exceptional. The best I have ever attended.”

– Panasonic
The Launch™ Overview

Your group practices innovative ways to create and implement ideas effectively as a team by working through this complex activity. No boring lectures here; The Launch™ is fun and energizing experience.

How The Launch™ Works

Teams of 6–10 build a catapult–type mechanism of PVC pipe to launch water balloons into a target area, with points given for distance and accuracy.

Each team is provided with building materials and an R&D report containing 2 potential—though not perfect—designs. Teams have 45 minutes to build and test their device, followed by a final demo of their creations.

Depending on your desired outcomes and time, it can be structured as a fun competition between teams for the best device or customized with an optional activity to examine and emphasize strategic thinking focused on collaboration between teams.

The Launch has been used quite successfully as a powerful wrap–up for conferences, a mid–point energizer, or as a lively teambuilding activity, stand–alone or complementing other activities.

Learning Outcomes

• Increase clear and effective communication
• Enhance teamwork and leadership skills
• Develop problem–solving capabilities
• Encourage flexibility and innovation

Clients Say

“We have been able to maintain much of the team building from the offsite back into the business...I am encouraged by the progress and momentum so far.”

–Sy Fahimi
Intuit
Life Cycles™ Overview

Bring your team’s values to life! Increase the value you provide your customers by building your team’s ability to connect with broader goals and values you all share. Life Cycles™ is an exceptional Odyssey Teams™ workshop that reinforces business and organizational skills through practical philanthropic activity.

Through the “Life Cycle” of creating something valuable and passing it on, your team experiences firsthand the influence of their actions, integrity, attention and intention on their work. Participants incorporate the takeaways of this experience in their bones and emerge with a new level of commitment. They discover just how much they get in return from the simple act of giving.

How Life Cycles™ Works

After experiential assessments and reflection, the group divides into smaller teams to begin a series of problem-solving exercises used as metaphors for effective teamwork, mirroring workplace constraints of limited time, tools and expertise.

Each successful completion yields parts for building a brand-new bicycle, until each team has all the necessary parts to assemble a final product. A facilitated debrief articulates the metaphors of this experience and connects back to personal and work life, reinforcing the deep impact of the collaborative building process.

The bicycles are donated to young people selected through our partnership with The Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Your group is aware of the learning outcomes of the training; however, you can choose to keep the bikes and children a secret for additional “punch” at the close.

Learning Outcomes

• Build a strong culture that embraces diversity and social responsibility
• Cultivate adaptability, responsiveness to change, full engagement
• Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence and collaboration
• Reconnect your team to the larger community; benefit from a broader perspective
• Produce a ripple effect; “pay it forward”

Clients Say

“We saw it as a bike, at first…but when you look through the eyes of your ‘customers,’ it’s a whole lot more.”

–Workshop Participant
LipDub Team Challenge™ Overview

The LipDub team challenge is a fun and unique way to grow as a team and practice working together effectively. Your team will be responsible for creating its own music video... in an unconventional, high energy, and engaging way. Equipped with all the necessary tools and guidelines, your team will set out to create a high-quality lip dub: a one-shot video in which participants dance and lip-synch to a song, which will have the audio of the real song dubbed over in post production.

Who Benefits

• Meetings that need an energizing and engaging activity that brings people together
• Teams that must quickly match skill with task to create maximum output
• Groups that need an increase in familiarity and “ice breaking”

How LipDub Works

Teams are selected and assigned a song. They’re then given digital video cameras, Mp3 players pre-loaded with their selected song, and lyrics so everyone can learn the song. After receiving instructions for the overall project, each team is on its own to create the coolest “lip-dub” music video ever!

The best lip dubs often travel through different rooms and situations within a building or space. Each team member should be seen at least once while the camera travels through the planned route. To add to the challenge and excitement, they will all need to show up in the final scene as well.

Lip dubs have become popular in commercials, and there are a plethora of self made lip dubs on YouTube. A good lip dub could be described as having the characteristics, or at least the appearance, of spontaneity, authenticity, group participation and of course, fun!

This program takes approximately 4 hours with debrief.

Effective in small groups and even better with larger groups, energy and engagement run high in the LipDub Team Challenge™.

Learning Outcomes

• Understand the value of collaborating across teams; identify opportunities
• Practice creative problem-solving skills in a team environment
• Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence
• Reconnect and align your team toward a common goal
• Unleash and stimulate your team’s creativity

Clients Say

“The Challenge: Engage a globally diverse Marketing team, who had not met face to face for 3 years, to connect and build business critical relationships. The Solution: Synergy Learning Systems LipDub activity. Energizing and engaging with tangible business outcomes.”

—Cameron Webb
Peak Teams
LiquidAssets™ Overview

LiquidAssets™ creates a fun—and assumption-questioning—context for examining the challenges that managers and team members face (and often unintentionally create) in a multi-faceted organization. LiquidAssets™ facilitates a deep understanding of personal leadership, regardless of title or responsibilities.

In a few hours, your group will experience the power of a unified team, aligned and focused toward one goal!

Who Benefits

• Departments challenged with communication and understanding between levels
• Entire organizations that need to come together under a shared vision
• Cross departments that are having difficulties working together and are “siloed”
• Geographically dispersed teams that need to increase interdependencies

How LiquidAssets™ Works

LiquidAssets™ simulates executives, middle managers and production teams operating as one overall organization to deliver a new product, a valuable liquid substance, to market within an ambitious time frame. Production teams solve complex problems in acquiring and transporting raw materials from the center of a force field circle through a hidden path to market, using cans, ropes, inner tubes, rubber tiles and walkie-talkies. Resources are negotiated through the chain of command; managers, not surprisingly, are caught in the middle.

Each level in the simulated organization develops its own perspective on the issues, and typically forms a limited and frustrated view of the efforts and concerns of other parts of the organization. After a facilitated mid-session offsite, in which participants begin to understand the issues from various perspectives, work becomes dramatically more focused. Teams learn to share information and resources, and operate with new energy stemming from a sense of alignment toward a common goal.

Learning Outcomes

• Understand the value and process of collaborating across teams and geographies
• Explore the importance of communication up, down and across teams and boundaries
• Gain new perspective and empathy for various roles in an organization
• Practice creative problem-solving skills in a team environment

Clients Say

“We’ve been working with Synergy for over seven years to provide an experience that was going to challenge and engage our smart, confident and driven new hires as part of our ongoing leadership development program. LiquidAssets is a powerful learning experience that shows the need to check assumptions, think proactively and work together toward successful outcomes and is consistently rated one of the highest rated activities with many hundred of our employees.”

—Frank O’Connor
VP of Staff Development and Training Turner Construction Company

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MasterMind Olympics™ Overview

For groups who want to build their capability to prioritize and strategize, MasterMind Olympics™ is for you! In MasterMind, teams are given more tasks than are possible to complete within the allotted time. Teams must evaluate their resources and make a plan; the winner is the team that can strategize, prioritize and communicate most effectively. An intellectual and playful competition to reinforce learnings . . . and get your team fired up!

Who Benefits

• Meetings that need an energizing and engaging activity to bring people together
• Groups that must prioritize multiple activities and decide which will have the greatest return
• Teams that must quickly match skill with task to create maximum output
• Groups that need an increase in familiarity and “ice breaking”

How MasterMind™ Works
Teams of up to 12 people are given a box containing 15 different subjective and objective challenges chosen to utilize all parts of the brain. Each challenge is scored based on completion or on “judging” at the end.

• Intellectual - Develop flexible thinking with puzzles and brainteasers.
• Building - Design and build towers and various contraptions within given constraints.
• Creative - Receive points from judges for best Makeover, Human Machine or Team Talent Challenge.
• Verbal - Think on your feet to complete verbal picture puzzles, write haikus or come up with palindromes.

Effective in small groups and even better with larger groups, energy and engagement run high in the MasterMind Olympics™, with challenges complex enough to engage the highest level of any organization.

Learning Outcomes

• Expand mental acuity and agility
• Develop your team’s ability to strategize and prioritize
• Practice direct, clear communication
• Build productive responses in pressured situations

Clients Say

“We’ve utilized Synergy’s services over the past couple of years and it’s been a consistent win every time. Most recently they provided a MasterMind Olympics activity for our library employees, who are smart, analytical and discerning. It exceeded our expectations and created a great start to our conference by increasing familiarity and connections. The activities were intelligent and challenging and encouraged people to stretch their comfort zone.”

–Lisa St. John, Director
Cooley Godward Kronish LLP
Neptune’s Crossing™ Overview

Is your company looking toward a challenging frontier and striving to meet customers’ increasingly complex requirements? Neptune’s Crossing™ spotlights the type of coordinated organizational effort needed to realize your organization’s aspirations. Neptune’s Crossing™ is a challenging, seemingly competitive—but ultimately collaborative—simulation that requires participants to work well within teams as well as across the organization.

How Neptune’s Crossing™ Works

Key customers come to you with a challenging project and a short timeline for completion: producing a fleet of seaworthy boats made to customer specifications.

The group is divided into multiple project teams with various roles. Teams explore and communicate customer needs throughout the organization. With the finest resources available—cardboard, plastic, foam, tape, etc.—each project team builds a quality boat to contribute to the overall fleet. Resources come at a price, and teams must work within budget.

A customer demo at the end of the fourth quarter demonstrates that the entire fleet can float at least one person across a body of water (a pool, in most cases), and floating 2 people per boat will impress the customer for sure! Teams often create good-natured competition in a paddle race to decide the fastest boat. The customer also expects dazzling and creative marketing presentations from each team.

The success of your organization rests on its ability to effectively serve customers, drive schedules, make the numbers, and coordinate work across departmental boundaries.

Learning Outcomes

- Practice creative problem-solving skills as a team
- Understand the strategic benefits of interdependency
- Develop your team’s ability to coordinate across boundaries and work within budget
- Increase customer focus and service
- Reframe challenges as opportunities for individual and team growth

Clients Say

“We’ve utilized Synergy’s services over the past couple of years and it’s been a consistent win every time. Most recently they provided a MasterMind Olympics activity for our library employees, who are smart, analytical and discerning. It exceeded our expectations and created a great start to our conference by increasing familiarity and connections. The activities were intelligent and challenging and encouraged people to stretch their comfort zone.”

–Lisa St. John,
Director
Cooley Godward Kronish LLP
PowerBall™ Overview

Executing plans across several groups in an organization is often marred by loosely defined agreements and gaps in communication. We created PowerBall™ to help participants learn new strategies for implementing complex projects involving several teams. PowerBall™ surfaces the challenges faced when coordinating multiple teams in an overall project, and provides context to practice effective cross-functional communication and to develop skills for streamlining processes across teams.

Who Benefits

• Departments challenged with communication and understanding between levels
• Entire organizations that need to come together under a shared vision
• Cross departments that are having difficulties working together and are “siloded”
• Geographically dispersed teams that need to increase interdependencies

How PowerBall™ Works

PowerBall™ simulates an organization with multiple project teams focusing on customer expectations, processes, production and time-to-market goals, budgets, revenue and expected gross margins.

The objective is to build a system to deliver a large quantity of PowerBalls (marbles) using PVC pipes, connectors and other materials. Each team’s subsystem is independently built to customer specifications before linking them together to form an overall system.

Teams often forget that they must integrate their individual solutions into one overall system, which initially results in chaos. When teams are redirected to focus on working collaboratively in their planning and implementation processes, chaos quickly transforms into productivity.

Learning Outcomes

• Understand the value and process of collaborating across teams and geographies
• Build effective communication and decision making
• Develop the strategic benefits of interdependence
• Practice creative problem-solving skills in a team environment
• Enhance high-performance behaviors under pressure

Clients Say

“PowerBall really is a key part of our leadership program, and one that is consistently rated highly by our participants in terms of how helpful it is in learning about leadership and team dynamics.”

—Sr. L&D Specialist
Google
The Quest™ Overview

Can your team be rescued from the Island of Confusion? The challenging, changing environment and uncertain outcomes mirror real world situations in The Quest's adventurous outdoor simulation. Armed with verbal clues or GPS technology and provisions, teams deal with setbacks, find clues and break the code that saves them. Particularly useful for accelerating communication and strategy implementation in cross-departmental teams.

How The Quest™ Works

The Quest's dynamic team development process activates teams to work together in a changing—and challenging—environment. The metaphor of setting out on an adventurous expedition with an uncertain outcome is ideal for teams engaged in strategic planning or starting a new project, or for a newly formed team. Their objective: to successfully navigate the gamut of challenges and break the transmitter code that enables rescue from the island.

The expedition begins with a brief scenario and limited supplies: enough calories to meet one challenge, a backpack and map or GPS (depending location). The team meets each challenge to gain calories and avoid handicaps (blindfolds, “loss” of speech), strengthening their abilities to work together, deal with setbacks, build momentum and assess strengths and learnings. As they proceed, encoded pages of the transmitter manual appear, providing critical information for their one opportunity for rescue.

A skillfully facilitated debrief identifies your group’s capabilities and opportunities for development and ensures maximum transfer of learnings and commitments.

Your team’s outcome? Renewed connection, skills, confidence and energy for the work ahead.

The Quest presents as a half- or full-day program with groups of 5 to 50, or can be used in a multi-day program to reinforce additional team development or strategic planning processes. We deliver The Quest to executive teams, cross-departmental groups, intact teams and sales conferences worldwide.

Learning Outcomes

Develop your strategy “muscles”

- Practice effective planning and execution as a team
- Explore the importance of communication up, down and across teams and boundaries
- Understand the process of collaborating across teams and geographies

Clients Say

“Synergy’s Quest program was an excellent team-building choice for our international group. It was an engaging activity that far exceeded our expectations. We look forward to working more with Synergy in the future.”

—Mark Olesen, VP of SaaS, Hewlett Packard
Need to unite your team to achieve a difficult goal in a changing environment? Benefit from the powerful, shared experience of climbing a high mountain without leaving the comfort of your conference room. Reach for the Summit™ is an interactive, video-based mountain climb that tests individual and team performance under pressure. Teams are challenged with real-life scenarios, using footage shot by Peak Teams in the New Zealand Southern Alps.

How Peak Teams’ Reach For the Summit™ Works

Comprised of three stages—Set Up, Base Camp and Summit—the objective of this program is to reach the highest peak in the fastest time, at the lowest cost, with as many climbers as possible. This requires each team to sustain performance while managing a budget, making decisions in a limited time frame... and dealing with people issues, such as losing key team members halfway up the mountain. As the virtual climb unfolds, participants realize that they hold the clues to achieving their own goals—as well as their team and community goals.

Participants become highly engaged in the experience and benefit from continuous learning as they progress toward the summit. Expert facilitation in applying these learnings provides an effective and compelling debrief.

Creative support material enhances and reinforces the journey toward success. Themed journals are provided to record team discussion and reflection; individual cards allow personalized learnings and commitments; managers are given “thought maps” to post in the office as visual reminders of the event. We highly recommend an inspiring keynote given by Rex Pemberton, the youngest Australian to climb all seven summits, including Mt. Everest. The program runs 4-8 hours in length, depending on desired outcomes.

Learning Outcomes

• Develop inspired and motivated individual leadership
• Evolve cohesive teamwork, spirit and trust
• Build effective communication and decision-making skills
• Practice high-performance behaviors under pressure in a changing environment

Clients Say

“[In 25 years of working with the world’s leading technology companies, I’ve conducted many leadership development events. ‘Reach for the Summit’ is one of the most memorable because of its ability not only to engage and excite our executives but also because it facilitated conversations very relevant to our goals and challenges. It made a significant difference in our offsite.”

–Lisa Cavallaro, Sr. Manager
World Wide Leadership Development
Cisco Systems
Sea of Change™ Overview

ROI? Customer service? The highly competitive surfing industry is the metaphor for Sea of Change’s interactive video simulation with surfer / presenter Mark Mathews. Your team glides smoothly over the competition when they develop strong relationships with photographers, media and PR people, in order to deliver sound return on investment to sponsors.

How Sea of Change™ Works
To succeed in the competitive multi-billion dollar surf industry, professional surfers must adapt to rapid change, distinguish themselves clearly for sponsors and work effectively in virtual teams. Your virtual surfing team is made up of individuals who do not work together directly but who need each other to succeed, such as photographers, swell forecasters, media and PR people—your internal clients.

Sea of Change’s dynamic interactive adventure combines spectacular footage, real-life scenarios from big wave chaser Mark Mathews’ career, personal stories and expert facilitation. Your team works through Set Up, Competition and Big Waves, maneuvering through each changing environment…and continuing to stay “in the curl”! The objective: managing the rapidly changing environment to bring in ROI for investors—your external clients. After each stage, teams receive a ‘checkpoint score’ on their revenue and sponsor satisfaction.

Sea of Change is a Peak Teams’ interactive virtual program, particularly useful for engaging and revitalizing customer orientation and service, promoting cross-group communication and collaboration, and practicing skillful and transformative responses to change.

Learning Outcomes
• Improve customer focus and find ways to differentiate
• Build stronger internal and external networks
• Enhance teamwork, leadership and change management skills
• Prepare to execute when the next opportunity arises

Clients Say
“Sea of Change and its’ interactive business related challenges was brilliant. It was very motivational - in these difficult days it completely took us out of the hard reality of layoffs and the financial crisis and gave us immense inspiration and a new perspective! Through practical examples Peak Teams brought us closer to client relationships and leadership.”

—Director, Global Financial Services Firm, UK
TeamThread™ Overview

Would your team benefit from uniting around a common purpose that is larger than your everyday work world? In this remarkable workshop, your group produces puppets for children to use in constructive play and to express their feelings with trained professionals. You can help give children a voice, a way to talk about their fears and pain.

How TeamThread™ Works

Groups are divided into teams of 6 to 8 people who design, cut, sew and decorate 3 to 4 puppets. Each team is provided with felt, yarn, material, sequins, buttons, glue, needles and thread to create the puppets and their cover bags to keep them clean. Groups may choose to write a short story about each puppet’s life to add to the children’s enjoyment. Additional learning (cross-team collaboration, resource sharing) can be designed into the activity if appropriate for your group.

Making puppets is not gender specific; men created most of the puppets shown above. This workshop provides an opportunity to step out of your comfort zone and be amazed by unknown talent in your group. Team members support others who may be challenged with sewing. The amount of thought and energy that goes into this endeavor is incredible and moving; thinking about your customer’s needs and how you can best serve them is both humbling and inspiring.

The Treehouse Foundation receives the finished puppets for use in their work with cancer centers, providing training and support for children whose parents or grandparents have been diagnosed with cancer.

Learning Outcomes

Coupled with skilled facilitation, the TeamThread program can help a team in the forming stage focus to:

- Improve customer focus
- Enhance teamwork
- Encourage creativity and innovation
- Reflect on the meaning of success and satisfaction, personally and as a team

Clients Say

“The forum gave us an opportunity to get to know folks better that we work with on a purely business level. Although at first there was some resistance from a few participants, their contributions to achieving our team goal was significant as we progressed. This dynamic mirrors what we experience in our day-to-day business environment! I appreciated the opportunity to participate in this relationship-building activity with a heart.”

–Lindsey Martinez
Assoc. Meeting Planner
McKesson Corporation

About Treehouse Foundation

The Children’s Treehouse Foundation is a non-profit organization for children whose parents or grandparents have been diagnosed with cancer. The Foundation provides professional training to cancer centers and hospitals to support these children via the CLIMB™ (Children’s Lives Include Moments of Bravery) program. The Treehouse Foundation is affiliated with more than 30 cancer centers across the country.
True Colors™ Overview

True Colors helps participants develop an understanding of their own style and the styles of others in order to be more effective in working with people of all types. It is ideal for new teams to quickly increase familiarity.

True Colors equips participants with the appropriate perspective and skills necessary to successfully manage relationships with others based on an understanding of style preferences. The module achieves this through a combination of self-assessment, individual and group exercises and activities, and various group discussions.

Who Benefits

• Teams who would like to gain familiarity with and understanding of one another.
• Teams who would like to work on communication to enable them to take on challenges more effectively

How True Colors Works

Participants are given a series of questions that they can either complete prior to the meeting or take 15 minutes at the start. After self-scoring, participants then are given their “true color” style preference (Blue, Green, Orange and Gold) with associated information. Facilitators then lead the groups through a series of large group discussions that help to highlight individual’s primary styles. Finally, each group presents out on different questions:

• What do we need people to understand about us?
• What are our strengths?
• What stresses and frustrates us?
• What are the potential pitfalls of our style?

What ensues is a deeper understanding of the necessity of having a group that has different primary styles (seeing our differences as a strength vs. a liability). Our experience with True Colors is that it’s the ideal type indicator to remember and easy to administer. Though much deeper surveys exist (MBTI, LSI, Enneagram), True Colors is unique in its ability to convey and grasp the primary styles with a large group.

We combine the True Colors assessment and training with some of our team development initiatives such that individuals can get a visceral experience of the different styles in action. The activities chosen in the design depends on the time allotted and the goals and objectives for your team.

Learning Outcomes

• Deeper understanding of ones self and others on his or her team
Synergy’s Programs A-Z

**AdVision™**
Lights … Camera … Action Learning! Your group writes, acts, and films an original, inventive commercial that demonstrates the creative power of collaborative minds—in just a few hours. AdVision is a powerful opportunity for your team to expand skills in cross-team communication, delivering a unified message and meeting tight deadlines.

**Everest™**
Inspire your team to band together as an expedition to Everest in this dynamic video-based team building, designed to complement and build on insights from Reach for the Summit. Individual accountability, team commitment and relationship, and goal alignment come clear, improving internal team process.

**BigPicture™**
Align your team in creative, unified strategic intent. BigPicture engages your group to design, paint, color and assemble a mural in 3-4 hours. The simulation addresses collaboration across teams, the roles of leadership and vision, and the importance of flexible thinking to meet changing customer expectations and markets.

**FilmFest™**
Does it feel as if your team is producing separate scenes for the same movie…and they’re not quite editing together smoothly? FilmFest dynamically demonstrates vision and goal alignment as your team writes, acts, shoots and edits your own short film. Unleash and stimulate your team’s innate creativity.

**Challenge Ropes Course™**
Explore active learning at Synergy’s “learning lab in the redwoods,” integrating and motivating your team to meet upcoming opportunities. The Challenge Ropes Course, a natural metaphor for flexibility, adaptability and growth, has both high and low activities and does not require special physical conditioning. Build skills in coaching, decision-making, risk-taking and support.

**Geoteaming™**
Develop your strategy “muscles.” Not your parents’ goofy scavenger hunt, Geoteaming is adult, high-tech adventure! Built on our intrinsic need for fun and connectivity and utilizing the latest GPS technology, participants are on a mission that requires team skills and collaboration for success. Customizable for meetings, off-sites and teambuilding programs.

**Life Cycles™**
The Life Cycles program reinforces business and organizational skills through a practical philanthropic activity—building bikes. Your team experiences firsthand the influence of their actions, integrity, attention and intention on their work … and discovers just how much they get in return from the simple act of giving.

**The Launch™**
Innovation and flexibility reign supreme in The Launch’s lively and thought-provoking construction activity. Teams strategize, innovate, build and demo catapults made of PVC pipe. Compelling collaborative or competitive energizer for your conference or meeting.
**LiquidAssets™**
LiquidAssets creates a fun—and assumption-questioning—context for examining the challenges faced by managers and team members. Teams plan and collaborate to deliver a valuable liquid product to market. LiquidAssets allows your group to experience the heady power of a united team, aligned and focused toward one goal.

**MasterMind™**
Strengthen your team’s capabilities to prioritize, strategize and communicate with MasterMind, an intellectual—and playful—competition. Teams are engaged with intellectual, creative and verbal puzzles and challenges to engage all parts of the brain, stimulating creativity and reinforcing learnings. Great meeting icebreaker or for forming teams.

**Neptune’sCrossing™**
Key customers ask your team to build seaworthy boats, with minimal resources and on a short timeline. (Sound familiar?) Neptune’sCrossing’s seemingly competitive—but ultimately collaborative—simulation spotlights the coordinated organizational effort needed to effectively serve customers, drive schedules, make the numbers and coordinate work across departments.

**Powerball™**
PowerBall teams build systems to customer specs to deliver powerballs (marbles). The outdoor simulation effectively surfaces the challenges inherent in coordinating multiple teams on an overall project. Participants practice cross-functional communication and discover and integrate new strategies and skills to streamline processes across teams.

**The Quest™**
Can your team be rescued from the Island of Confusion? No one is voted off, but the challenging, changing environment and uncertain outcomes mirror the ‘real world’ in The Quest’s adventurous outdoor simulation. With GPS & provisions, teams deal with setbacks, find clues and break the code that saves them. Useful for forming and cross-departmental teams.

**Reach for the Summit™**
Benefit from the powerful, shared experience of climbing the Alps—in the comfort of your conference room. Reach for the Summit’s interactive, video-based mountain climb tests individual and team performance under pressure. Teams climb while managing a budget, making decisions in a limited time frame, and dealing with people issues.

**Sea of Change™**
ROI? Customer service? The competitive surfing industry is the metaphor for Sea of Change’s interactive video simulation with surfer / presenter Mark Mathews. Professional surfing requires strong relationships with photographers, media and PR (internal clients) to deliver return to sponsors (external clients). Product differentiation, customer focus and change management are reflected in sponsor satisfaction.

**TeamThread™**
Teambuilding with a heart! TeamThread entails designing and creating children’s puppets for ‘customers’ at the nonprofit Treehouse Foundation. Collaboration and customer service come into clear focus in this engaging and inspiring (non-gender) activity. Get perspective on the real meaning of success and contribute to something larger.

For more program information, contact Synergy Learning Systems.