

ABSTRACT

For many years, team building has been used by organizations to enhance the moral of employees in different fields. Proponents of this strategy argued that it is ideal in addressing interpersonal problem in the workplace while offering employees opportunity to acquire vital skills to help them cope and improve productivity. Whereas the concept has yielded some positive impact, the problem is that most organizations tend to deploy team building only when there are challenges affecting the productivity of employees. The same practice has also been observed in the telecommunications where employees are expected to produce results even when economic times are hard, competition is high and customer demands are prolific. As a result, team building is often considered an ideal strategy for developing high performing teams with desirable interpersonal skills, team resilience and better understanding of organizational goals. Whereas there is little literature on the reasons why telecommunications firms adopt team building, there is also no clear measure as to whether the implementation of team building in telecommunications industry improves employee performance. Besides, it is not clear whether the observed varied success of telecommunication firms like Safaricom can be attributed to the improved performance of their employees as a result of tem building. Guided by Belbin's Team Role Theory of Performance, the main purpose of this study was to analyse effectiveness of team building as a performance strategy in the telecommunications industry. Specific objectives were to: Assess need for team building as a performance strategy; ascertain effectiveness of team building as a performance strategy; and investigate cost-effective ways of enhancing the effectiveness of team building in the telecommunications industry in Kenya. The study was conducted in Nairobi using Safaricom Limited as a case. Descriptive research design was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from a target population of 1,553 Safaricom employees including sales marketing and sales people, retail supervisors and HR managers involved in operational activities. Quota sampling technique was utilized to draw a sample of 310 participants in order to collect quantitative data using structured questionnaires. Qualitative data was collected from 15 key informant interviewees and focused group discussions. After the actual study, a total of 287 data sets were validated and accepted for statistical analysis. The data was analysed using frequency distribution and Pearson's correlation techniques to draw relevant conclusions from the findings. Results of this study established that team building is still a popular performance strategy as noted by about 75% of participants. In particular, organizational goals and conditions of the work environment had positive influence on the need and choice for team building as a performance strategy in telecommunications industry. It was found to be ideal in providing skills that help employees become responsible team players, resilient and with better abilities to meet sales targets. About 56.4% ascertained that indeed team building is an effective performance strategy. The study further established that team building had positive influence on improved performance of employees in telecommunications industry. However, the study recommends that in order for team building to be more cost-effective, it should be designed as a regular program with specific objectives and measurable outcome. Such outcome should be evident, substantial and long-lived. It is also a recommendation of this study that further research should be taken on the challenges affecting the effectiveness of team building, and comparative studies should also be done across different industries to establish where team building is most effective and relevant.