



TIME TO TAKE IT OUT OF THE OFFICE

To build stronger work bonds, take your team away from their desks

BY ATHENA MCKENZIE

A successful team-building activity can create new ways of communicating and collaborating. The camaraderie established during “playtime” at an offsite location can have enduring benefits once everyone is back in the office.

THE COMMUNAL TABLE

So how do you plan activities that will build team bonds? One activity that often fosters that true sense of collaboration is cooking a meal side by side and then eating it as a group.

“Food brings people together,” says Executive Chef Shirley Lang of Spirit Culinary Tours. “When you’re eating a lunch and a dinner together and you’re all around the table, you’re all at the same level — it’s not about being boss, or supervisor and employee. It’s about being human.”

Through Spirit Culinary Tours, Chef Lang can customize exclusive visits to the culinary artisans on the Island. Corporate clients, which have included Microsoft, take in local farms, craft distilleries and breweries, and

destination wineries, and then finish with a feast and wine tasting at Chef Lang's table. The unique menu is created from ingredients and libations purchased during the day's exploration. One recent planned tour included foraging for seaweed with a local biologist, a seafood feast on the beach, a visit to a farm and to Sheringham Distillery near Sooke.

"Participants finish the day excited and fulfilled," Chef Lang says. "They appreciate that it's interactive, they're not just being lectured at, and we're helping people discover something new, so it gives them a lot to talk about."



ENERGY BOOST

Some leaders are looking to shake things up a little when they take the team out of the office. An energizing experience can inject some much-needed vitality.

Luckily, we are blessed with plenty of adventurous options on Vancouver Island, including Adrena Line Zipline Adventure Tours, set high in 100 acres of coastal temperate rainforest near Sooke.

"It's very safe, it's not that extreme, but it gives you a thrill," says Jeremy Wilson, director of Adrena Line, whose corporate clients have included ABE books, Costco, TD Bank and Great West Life Assurance Company.

A successful offsite excursion can promote cooperation among team members, increase employee performance and enhance employee job satisfaction.

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offsite activities to get your team talking

1 A NEW PERSPECTIVE Book a scenic seaplane tour over the city or out to Butchart Gardens. harbourair.com

2 GRAPE EXPECTATIONS Explore the Island's burgeoning wine offerings with a chauffeured wine tour. islandtimetours.com

3 ON THE WATER Embrace the benefits of West Coast life with a group paddle board or kayak lesson. oceanriver.com

4 IN THE SWING Group employees by experience level and schedule a day of golf lessons. bearmountain.ca

5 HOPPY HOUR Get the group on bikes and tour the local craft breweries for a look behind the scenes. thepedaler.ca

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Conference Spaces

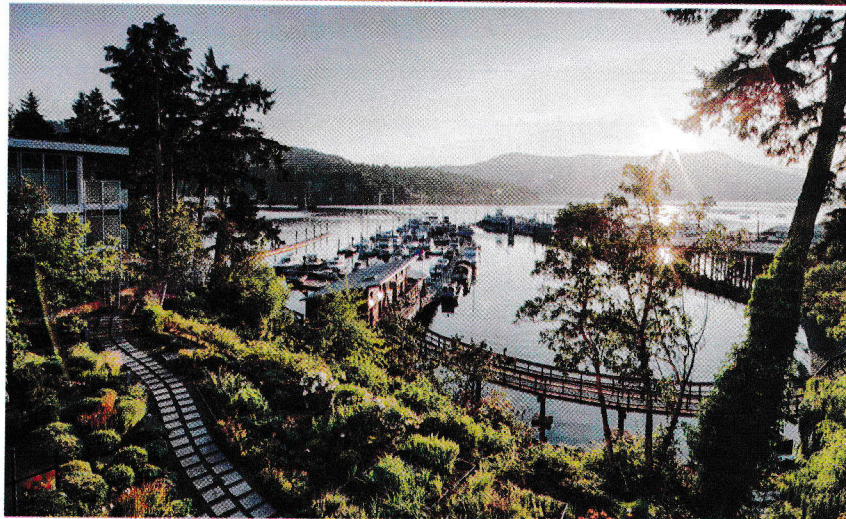
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