

# Retreats Build Teams ... And the Bottom Line

Recently I felt myself approaching the crispy side of burnt out, and I realized I needed to do for myself what I recommend to my clients – I needed to retreat. I needed to back slowly away from my desk and the overflowing email inbox, the virtual meetings, the in-person conferences and, basically, the day-to-dayness of my work – and get away.

## What is a Retreat, Anyway?

I know that for some, just the idea of a “retreat” sounds like a good excuse to goof off or like a waste of time. But nothing could be further from the truth. The benefits of team retreats are many, yet a recent survey by Robert Half Management Resources found that only 20 percent of companies hold these offsite meetings.

A team retreat (held off site, away from the work environment) is an incredibly powerful way to bring teams and leaders together to craft a greater vision for a company’s future growth.

## Why Now?

It’s fair to say that we’ve all been in overdrive in this weird post-pandemic time. And, sadly, many leaders feel like the “silos” that existed in their team “BC” - or Before Covid - have become reinforced and even strengthened as they worked apart. Holding a team retreat is a fantastic way to re-energize your team and to get them to focus on how they can work together better. And dare I say, your team needs this now, more than ever!



## What's the Big Deal?

CFOs whose companies offer these meetings were surveyed about why they hold offsites to uncover their rationale. Now, remember, we’re talking CFO’s – Chief Financial Officers - the folks who keep track of all of the money for the organization. They think in terms of revenue, expenses, and investments. So, you know if they’ve bought in to this

concept it has to be because there's a pretty significant return on the investment.

Since only about 20% of companies conduct them, the team retreat is almost like the best-kept secret to improving the bottom line. But here, the pluses of this impactful strategy are revealed so you can take advantage of them.

## The Top 3 Benefits of Team Retreats

The CFO's were asked, "What is the single greatest benefit of having a corporate retreat?" Here are their top 3 responses:

### 1. Improves Teamwork and Morale

Getting away from the work environment, or at least from the day-to-dayness of work, gives everyone a way to reconnect and remember what they appreciate about one another. A relaxed setting is conducive to building camaraderie and rekindling the team spirit that may have been extinguished in all of the stress of the past year and a half.

A team retreat is an opportunity for your team members to relax, build trust, and to ditch the masks (pardon the pun) that keep them from bonding during the normal work routine.

Offsites are an investment in your overall culture, and aren't just about holding hands and singing Kumbaya. Team members will come away feeling recharged, refreshed, and ready to take on the challenges to come.

### 2. Provides an Opportunity for Creativity

Getting people out of their work environment and breaking their routines, you foster an atmosphere where they can be much more creative. I see it all the time. It's downright magical. Teams that have boring, unimaginative, stale meetings in the office come alive in a retreat setting.

Having a skilled outside facilitator who designs the retreat properly allows team members to see things with a fresh eye, a new perspective, and they'll be more likely to come up with innovative solutions.

Oh, and BTW, as the team leader, I strongly discourage you from trying to run this retreat yourself. Doing so would be a little bit like me trying to cut my own hair. No offense to anyone who does cut their own hair, but I know for me, the results would prove that I didn't involve a professional.

You want to have an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing creative ideas, regardless of how whacky they might seem at first blush. This needs to be a judgment-free zone, with a fun, open feel and you'll want someone who doesn't have skin in the game to guide your work. A professional who's skilled in creating the right environment will facilitate exercises designed to draw out the best, most creative ideas from each participant. To reap the lasting benefits of a team retreat, invest in a professional facilitator.

### 3. Aligns Teams Around Business Strategies

A team retreat is an ideal time to take a break from working **IN** the business in order to spend time working **ON** the business.

In your normal routine you're so focused on your immediate to-do list that you can't even think about broader goals.

An offsite provides the designated time and space to address the questions that you typically don't have time for, and it's this lack of attention to these bigger issues which causes companies to stall before getting to the next level. It's important to go beneath the surface to work on the deeper issues.



In the team retreat programs that I offer, we focus on how a group of senior leaders can function better as a team, improve communication, re-commit to their work, hold one another accountable, set strategy, brainstorm ideas for achieving goals, and thus ultimately improve the bottom line. We also identify how they can be more effective in their individual leadership roles.

## Will you take advantage of this best-kept secret?

Sure, I know that it's not easy to get away from the office for a day or two to strategize and recharge, but I urge you to look at it as an investment in your business, not as an expense. As with any investment, you'll reap the dividends over time as you build a strong leadership team capable of taking your organization to new levels.

I also urge you not to wait until your team - like me - is reaching the crispy side of burnt out before you plan your leadership retreat.

If you'd like a guide on the side as you create a retreat for your team, let's talk. I'd love to help transform your leaders into a high-performing, cohesive team to positively impact your bottom line.

Visit [JenniferLedet.com](http://JenniferLedet.com) to learn more or call (985) 447-9778.

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## Meet Jennifer Ledet, CSP

Born and raised along the bayous of South Louisiana, Jennifer Ledet, Certified Speaking Professional, SHRM-SCP, mixes her Cajun heritage with concrete, practical leadership strategies to solve people problems and produce results. Her virtual and in-person programs focus on mastering communication, inspiring real teamwork, and amplifying your influence to accelerate your success.

Whether you're an executive leader who would like a guide on the side via private coaching, your whole leadership team needs a booster-shot in the arm to help them to all row in the same direction, or you're a smart, savvy business woman who could benefit from the Women's Leadership Collective, Jennifer's down-to-earth, tell-it-like-it-is approach will leave a lasting impact on your leadership.

