

# Newsletter: August 2017



## RETREAT OR NOT TO RETREAT

---

### **Retreats with Purpose and Impact**

Like many of our clients, you've probably wondered whether a retreat could be a good thing for your organization. Maybe there's some dysfunction on a particular team or a specific problem you know you ought to address, or you want to build excitement for upcoming changes in your organization. Perhaps you feel your team could benefit from a longer conversation about important issues, or you could really use a dedicated planning or brainstorming session that just isn't happening within the regular workday. Whatever the reason, you're thinking the time could be right for a retreat, but you might not exactly know *how* a retreat could be beneficial or what to actually *do* when you get there.

It's absolutely true that a retreat can re-energize your people, foster greater trust and strengthen internal connections, expose hidden talents and boost knowledge, and trigger new and fresh ideas—but only if it's well planned, well organized and well executed.

## **Facilitating Your Retreat**

You don't *need* an outside facilitator for your retreat, but a skilled facilitator can bring a level of professionalism, objectivity and efficiency to the event that can yield a far more dynamic, robust and lasting outcome. An internal facilitator must either forgo participating in order to lead the discussion or, at the very least, wear dueling hats as both facilitator and participant, which can be confusing, distracting and disconcerting to everyone. Further, participants aren't nearly as likely to open up and speak candidly to "the boss" as they are to a neutral party.

Expert external facilitators come without preconceived notions and biases and know how to safely and comfortably ask tough questions and genuinely involve and adeptly manage all participants—the introvert, the minority opinion and the life of the party alike. Moreover, the best will serve as your start-to-finish planning partners in creating a retreat with incredible impact.

## **Before the Retreat**

As you start conceptualizing and developing your retreat, you should be totally clear on why you're doing it, who will participate and what the event might look like. The retreat specialists at Leap Solutions ask the right questions and provide all the guidance and support you need to make your retreat purposeful and powerful.

### ***Why?***

A retreat can accomplish anything you want it to: team building, leadership development, business development, planning, visioning, problem-solving...you name it! But to determine your retreat goals and priorities, you must first thoroughly examine the dynamics, characteristics and personalities at play in your organization and the complexities, challenges and opportunities you're currently facing.



When you engage with Leap, we'll start with the end in mind: at the end of your retreat, what do you hope to have accomplished? We then do whatever it takes to plan the ideal retreat to make that a reality. We talk to you at length, gathering information and brainstorming, to help you clarify your purpose and fine-tune your objectives and goals. Our pre-retreat activities might include community surveys, individual profiles and in-person interviews with key players. We then draft a retreat agenda that is focused, action-packed and reasonable, and we collaborate with you and your team to finalize it such that every item is tied to your desired outcomes.

### ***Who?***

When you know your ultimate retreat goals, it's time to decide who will

participate. It could be a specific team, executive team, board, staff, or some combination of the above. You might opt to include all employees, only upper management, or perhaps a vertical slice of your organization. You could choose to mix people up in order to encourage cross-department collaboration or keep them in teams to tighten cohesion. Again, Leap can be your trusted, seasoned guide, asking probing questions and helping you stretch your vision and base your decision solidly on your core objectives.

We are also committed to doing everything it takes to get your chosen group ready for their retreat. From soliciting their input and eliciting their buy-in to providing complete background materials and assigning relevant homework, we ensure that your people are eager and fully prepared to make the very most of our retreat time together.

### ***What?***

What will your retreat entail? You don't have to go somewhere on a retreat, but a change of view can be powerfully effective toward achieving your goals. While we assure you that a retreat is a priceless investment in the outcome of your organization, we always keep your budget considerations at top of mind as we help you find and design just the right location, environment and event.

Whether it's on- or offsite, half a day or multiple days, what matters is that your retreat is out of the ordinary, unique to your organization and has a purpose that is evident to each and every participant. A well-planned retreat feels entirely different than a usual workday—it's less formal, it's exceptionally engaging, and it brings about a special kind of openness and dialogue that doesn't happen otherwise. Ropes courses and "Kumbaya" moments aren't required—though if you're doing things right, there will be plenty of bonding and fun!



### **During the Retreat**

With expertise in agenda management, time management, group dynamics and crowd control, the highly experienced facilitators at Leap Solutions come thoroughly prepared and completely focused on driving your retreat toward your desired outcomes. We facilitate purposeful, thought-provoking conversations and engaging exercises, challenge your team to rethink assumptions and advance fresh ideas, bring about strategies and help set action-oriented priorities and timelines.

We're always watching and reading the room, making sure everyone has the chance to speak and feel heard but no one dominates, and keeping your event on track and on time. We're also taking copious notes to document everything that's covered, including an action list for tracking commitments, responsible

parties and deadlines. It's our mission and promise that every participant comes away feeling more productive, accomplished and motivated than ever.

### **After the Retreat**

Your retreat isn't over when the event is done! Afterward, we prepare and deliver detailed retreat notes to you. Then, together, we go over the notes and use them to develop an implementation plan for taking your organization to the next level. We identify and assign champions to the cause—people who won't let your organization forget all that you've accomplished and how you've committed to moving forward—as well as owners to individual tasks and next steps. We also conduct a post mortem to inform your future retreats, including participant evaluations about individual components of the retreat and the overall experience.

### **Your Takeaway**

Ultimately, we at Leap Solutions want every one of your participants (even the skeptics!) to feel that the time spent was truly enjoyable and wholly worthwhile. Each individual should take something away from the retreat that enhances his or her day-to-day role and distinctly and noticeably improves your organization. Moreover, everyone should leave renewed and bonded by a shared purpose and direction that can launch your organization to a level you never thought possible. These are the rewarding, tangible retreat results that bring organizations back to Leap year after year.



---

*Copyright © 2017 Leap Solutions Group, Inc., All rights reserved.*

Thank you for subscribing to our Leap Solutions newsletter.

**Our mailing address is:**

1400 North Dutton Avenue, #15 Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
707-527-0969

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

MailChimp