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The 3Es Evolved



Engagement, Education and Experience, held inside an Environment built for play.

Rethinking how we build stronger teams and more intentional workplace cultures.

Corporate CHALLENGE Events Est. 1994

By Shane Rakich
Foreword by Dwain Richardson

In this edition

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Shane Rakich, Dwain Richardson and CCE

How to read this

Start with the thinking behind the 3Es Evolved, then explore how each element influences the way teams work together. On page 24, you'll find a simple diagnostic to help identify where your team might benefit from greater attention.

Colour key

- The Environment
- Engagement
- Education
- Experience
- Play

Engagement gives a team its agreements. Education gives it understanding. Experience gives it proof.



The culture you create matters



Dwain Richardson
General Manager,
Corporate Challenge Events

In more than 30 years of working with organisations across New Zealand and Australia, I've seen plenty of changes in how we work, how we lead and what people expect from their workplaces.

What hasn't changed is the importance of how people work together.

Every organisation has its strategies, targets and expectations. But underneath all of that is a group of people who need to communicate, trust one another, navigate challenges and find a sense of purpose in what they do.

As leaders, we have an enormous influence on the conditions that make those things possible. And I believe we need to be more intentional about that responsibility.

The original 3Es of Education, Engagement and Environment grew from our experience at Corporate Challenge Events. We recognised that bringing people together was valuable, but what happened around those experiences mattered just as much. The environment people worked in, the opportunities they had to learn and the way they engaged with one another all played a part.

Over the years, our work has continued to reinforce that thinking. Play has always been central to what we do, not simply as a way to bring people together, but as an opportunity to see how teams interact, challenge assumptions and build stronger relationships.

What I appreciate about Shane's work in *The 3Es Evolved* is that he's taken those original principles and explored how they influence one another. By introducing Experience as a distinct element and placing Play at the heart, he's given us a more complete way of understanding how positive team culture develops.

It doesn't replace the original thinking. It builds on it, recognising that the environment we create, the behaviours we practise, what we learn and the experiences we share are all connected.
And there's an important question I hope every leader considers while reading this book.

Are you creating the conditions for your people to do their best work together, or are you expecting it to happen naturally?

Culture isn't built through good intentions alone. It's shaped by the decisions leaders make, the behaviours they demonstrate and the opportunities they create for their people.

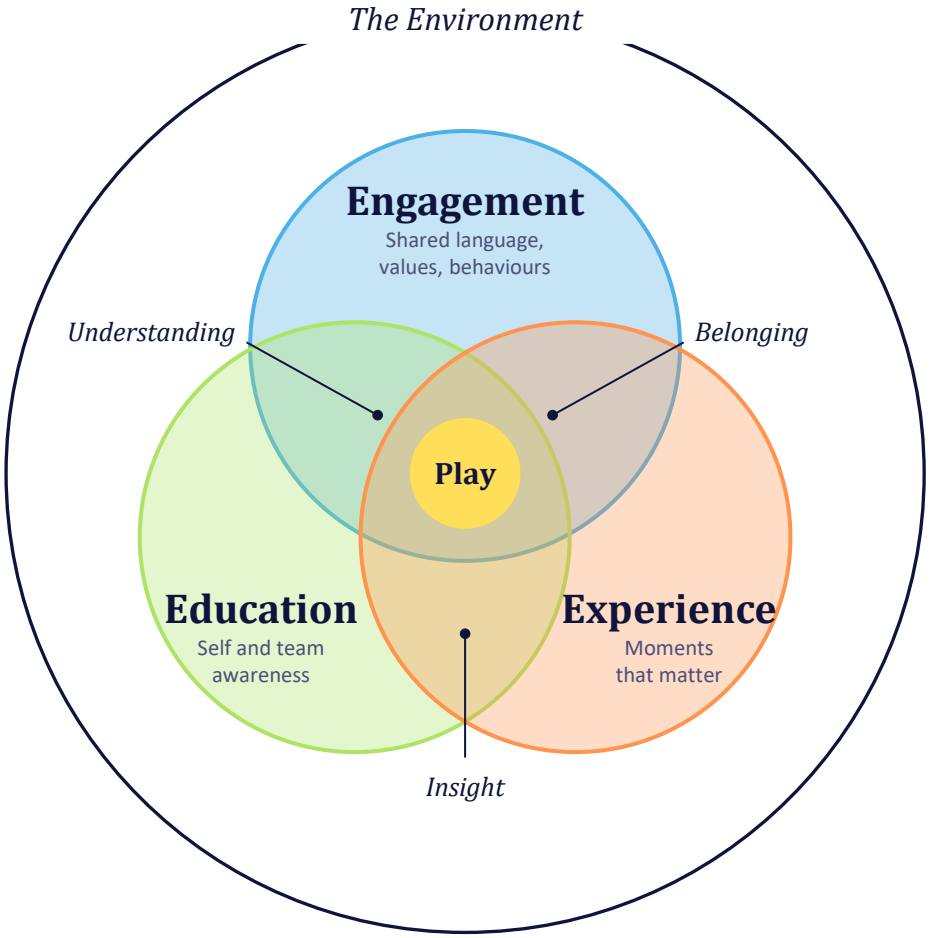
My hope is that this book encourages you to look at those things a little differently, challenge your own thinking and find something practical you can take back to your team.

The model at a glance

Culture is designed, not hoped for

Every team has a culture, whether it has been deliberately shaped or simply developed over time. You see it in how people communicate, respond to pressure, make decisions and support one another. What interests me is how much of that culture becomes visible when we bring people together outside their usual routines.

The 3Es Evolved brings together three interconnected elements: Engagement, Education and Experience. All three exist within an Environment that influences how they develop, with Play at the heart. The following pages explore why these relationships matter and how leaders can influence them.



The Environment

What conditions is the team working in?

Engagement

How do we choose to show up for each other?

Education

How do we each work, communicate and play?

Experience

Where do we get to feel and practise a great team?

Play

What makes honesty and creativity possible?



Positive team culture

Positive team culture is an ecosystem

Understanding how the elements work together.

Think about a healthy ecosystem in nature. Its strength doesn't come from any one element operating independently, but from the relationships between them and the conditions that allow them to thrive.

I believe positive team culture works in much the same way.

We often approach culture through individual initiatives. We organise experiences to bring people together, introduce values to guide behaviour and invest in education to develop our people. Each can make a valuable contribution, but how often do we consider the relationship between them?

The 3Es Evolved looks at culture as an interconnected ecosystem, shaped by the Environment and three essential elements within it.

Engagement establishes how we choose to show up for one another, creating shared language, values and agreed behaviours.

Education builds our understanding of ourselves and others, helping us recognise differences and work more effectively together.

Experience gives us opportunities to feel those connections, practise behaviours and discover what we can achieve together.

The ecosystem in practice

Consider a team that agrees everyone should have an opportunity to contribute in meetings. That's **Engagement**. Understanding that some people think aloud while others prefer time to reflect brings **Education** into the picture. A shared **Experience** can then provide an opportunity to recognise those differences and practise working together in a new way.

The Environment

But whether that understanding carries into everyday work depends on the Environment.

- Do leaders invite different perspectives?
- Are people comfortable speaking up?
- Are the agreed behaviours genuinely supported?

At the heart of the model: Play

Play offers opportunities for curiosity, experimentation, learning and connection. It's a fundamental human behaviour, but not something we can manufacture simply by asking people to participate. Leaders can create the conditions for play, while recognising that the experience must be genuine and chosen.

What makes this model valuable is that the elements don't operate in a fixed sequence, nor does every team need the same approach. Each contributes something different. And when we understand how they influence one another, we have a more intentional way to develop positive team culture.

The opportunity isn't to control every interaction within the ecosystem, but to create the conditions in which people and teams can thrive.

Thirty-two years in the making

An evolution of thinking, shaped by more than three decades of bringing teams together.

Corporate Challenge Events has been bringing teams together since 1994. Over those years, our understanding of what creates positive team culture has continued to develop.

Dwain Richardson's original 3Es of Education, Engagement and Environment emerged from that experience. His philosophy gave leaders a practical way to think about culture beyond individual activities and events, something he explored further in his earlier ebooks on building positive team culture.

As our work evolved, I became increasingly interested in what happens when people experience working together outside their usual routines.

We've seen teams approach challenges in unexpected ways, discover strengths in colleagues they thought they knew and recognise behaviours that weren't always obvious in their everyday work. Those experiences often give people something tangible to reflect on and build upon.

It became clear to me that **Experience deserved its own place in the model**, rather than simply being a method through which Engagement and Education happened.

The 3Es Evolved reflects that thinking, with Experience joining Engagement and Education as three interconnected elements, while Environment continues to shape the conditions around them.

It's the next chapter in a philosophy that has grown alongside our experience of working with teams.

The original 3Es



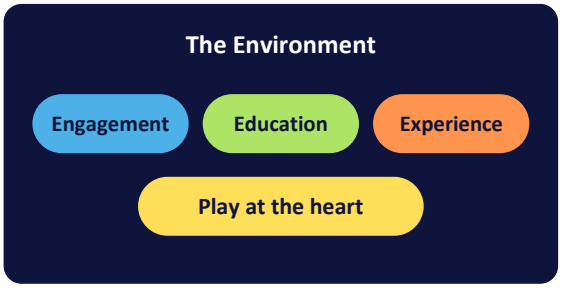
The Environment encapsulates the other two.

The 3Es Reimagined



Recognising Experience as a distinct element.

Today The 3Es Evolved



Bringing the thinking together in one interconnected model.

What has changed

Why team culture needs a rethink

Workplaces are full of capable people who do not really know each other.

Organisations invest considerable time and resources in bringing their people together, developing their capabilities and creating workplaces where people want to contribute.

Yet these efforts are often approached separately. A team-building event is organised, a workshop is delivered, values are revisited and everyone returns to their usual routines.

Each initiative can be valuable in its own right. But are we building on what people learn and experience, or simply moving on to the next initiative?

Through our work with teams, I've seen how much can be revealed when people step outside their usual roles. Unexpected strengths emerge, assumptions are challenged and people discover different ways of working together.

The question is what happens next. Do leaders create opportunities to build on those moments, or does everyday work take over?

Perhaps the opportunity isn't to do more for our teams, but to be more intentional about what we do and how we follow through.

From	To
Team building is a perk, a reward or an end-of-year social.	**Culture is a strategic lever that shapes performance, retention and leadership.**
A team-building experience treated as a standalone activity.	**An intentional approach where Engagement, Education and Experience strengthen one another.**
Success measured primarily by whether everyone had fun.	**Success means shared language in use, deeper understanding and visible behaviour change.**
Culture is values on a wall and an engagement survey once a year.	**Culture is agreed behaviours, real understanding and shared moments, reinforced often.**

Why a team needs all three

Why good intentions aren't enough

Most culture efforts fail in one of a few predictable ways, and each failure maps to a missing part of the model.

Engagement

Shared values, different interpretations

A team might agree to "communicate openly", yet one person processes ideas aloud while another needs time to think. Without understanding those differences, even well-intentioned agreements can lead to frustration.

Education

Understanding without application

A profiling workshop can reveal valuable insights into how colleagues communicate and approach their work. But unless those insights influence everyday behaviours, the team may return to familiar habits.

Experience

An opportunity to build on

A great team experience creates connection, shared memories and opportunities to discover different strengths. When leaders build on those moments, the experience can also become a starting point for further team development.

The Environment

When the workplace works against you

A team can agree to collaborate, communicate openly and try new approaches. But if leaders discourage questions or mistakes are met with criticism, those behaviours become much harder to practise.

The Environment gives it the conditions.

Engagement gives it its agreements.

Education gives it understanding.

Experience gives it proof.

Where play fits

Play is often treated as a break from serious work. Yet science recognises it as a fundamental human behaviour involved in learning, adaptability and social connection. The National Institute for Play has spent decades exploring its importance in human development. For leaders, this changes the conversation. Play isn't an optional extra. It's a powerful way to bring Engagement, Education and Experience together.



The ring that sets the culture

Every team already has an Environment. The only choice is whether it was designed.

The Environment is the setting a team works in, physical as much as mindset. It shapes behaviour before anyone says a word. It is the feeling people get on arrival, and it carries through everything that follows.

Dwain's original 3Es recognised the importance of Environment in shaping how people engage and learn. That thinking remains central to this model.

I see four areas leaders can influence, often through relatively small changes.

Physical

The rooms, venues and spaces

A room set up for presentations encourages listening. One designed for interaction invites participation. Consider whether your physical space supports what you're asking people to do.

Virtual

Where hybrid teams meet

Connection will not happen by accident online. Experience moments need deliberate design, and the shared language needs to stay visible in everyday tools.

Psychological

How safe it feels to try

Stretch is valuable. Humiliation is not. Design challenges that encourage participation, not exposure. Play creates opportunities to experiment, take risks and learn from mistakes in an environment where people feel safe to be themselves.

Leadership

What leaders do, not what they say

Leaders who ask for the behaviours but do not model them first undermine the agreement. The best leaders get involved and do not separate themselves from the team.

The conditions come first

Environment or Experience?

The Environment is the conditions. Experience is the moments that happen inside them.

A great Experience in a poor Environment fades. A good Environment with no Experience never gets tested. A team needs both, and they do different jobs.

How the Environment feeds each element

Engagement Makes it safe to say what you need and to hold each other to the agreement.

Education Gives people time and space to learn, not just to attend.

Experience Lifts people out of routine so moments of connection, pride and insight can happen.

Play Creates the conditions for curiosity, creativity and experimentation, where people feel comfortable exploring new ideas, taking risks and learning without fear of judgement.

Read your Environment

Five questions for a leader to ask this week.

1. Does the environment where your team meets encourage the participation and collaboration you're asking for?
2. Do meetings open with real presence, or with half-checked phones?
3. Could a new starter describe how the team works within their first fortnight?
4. Does your team feel comfortable experimenting, sharing new ideas and making mistakes without fear of judgement?
5. Do leaders go first?

Culture is the feeling people get when they walk in, and the feeling they keep getting.

Start here

The Environment is often the most immediate place to start. Leaders can influence the conditions their teams work in through everyday decisions and behaviours.

Pick one question from the list. Change one thing. Pay attention to what happens next.



01

Engagement

How do we choose to show up for each other?

Engagement builds the shared language, values and agreed behaviours that tell a team how it has chosen to act together.

Engagement is the foundation. It is where a team stops relying on assumptions and starts operating from explicit, shared agreements.

At the heart of this element sits the FISH philosophy, a simple and memorable set of practices for choosing a positive way of working. It gives a team a common vocabulary it can use in the moment.

The four practices are not complicated. Their power is that they are simple enough to be said out loud in a busy workday without anyone feeling lectured.

The FISH philosophy: four practices

Be There

Give people your full presence. Listen without half-checking your phone or planning your reply.

In practice: phones away in team meetings, a genuine check-in to start, eyes on the person speaking.

Play

Bring energy, humour and creativity to the work. Lightness is a skill, not a distraction.

In practice: Introduce playful challenges, celebrate wins in creative ways and encourage people to experiment with new ideas without fear of getting things wrong.

Make Their Day

Look for small, genuine ways to lift someone else.

In practice: public thanks for specific contributions, handwritten notes, noticing the quiet effort that goes unseen.

Choose Your Attitude

You cannot always choose the situation, but you can choose how you respond to it.

In practice: reframing a setback in the huddle, asking "What is the useful response here?"

Four building blocks

The agreement matters. The process of creating it matters more.

1
Shared language

Words for what a team values let it coordinate faster and correct more gently.

2
Shared values

Chosen by the team and translated into plain English.

3
Frameworks

A repeatable structure, such as a meeting rhythm, carries values into daily work.

4
Agreed behaviours

Written in observable terms, including what happens when someone steps outside them.

Shared language in action "I think we drifted away from Be There in that meeting" lands very differently from "You were not listening." Shared language moves feedback from personal to behavioural.

Teams that co-write their behaviours own them. Teams that are handed behaviours comply with them.

What good looks like

- People use the shared language unprompted, including leaders.
- Feedback is given and received faster, with less defensiveness.
- Team members can give a specific example of how they've put an agreed behaviour into practice.
- The team can name the last time it noticed itself drifting.

Common pitfalls

- Treating FISH as a one-off workshop rather than an ongoing vocabulary.
- Leaders who ask for the behaviours but do not model them first.
- Values too abstract to observe, such as integrity or excellence.
- Over-engineering. Three to five behaviours people live beat fifteen no one remembers.

The new starter test

Could a new starter watch the team for a week and describe the agreement back?

Try it: Team Agreement in 15 In 15 minutes, ask your team to identify three behaviours they want to practise consistently. Use the FISH! principles as a starting point, agree on what those behaviours look like in everyday work and record them somewhere the team can revisit.



02

Education

How do we each work, communicate and play?

Education is where a team learns about itself, then puts that learning to work. Two tracks run at once: learning about yourself and learning about everyone else.

Understanding our own preferences is a starting point. The real value comes from recognising how those preferences influence the people around us, and learning to adapt so we can work more effectively together. DOPE is a practical communication profiling framework that helps people recognise how they prefer to communicate, make decisions and interact with others. The four bird styles give teams a shared language for understanding differences, rather than putting people into fixed personality categories.

Track one: communication styles with DOPE

Dove

Warm, patient and supportive. Listens well and puts relationships first.

Under pressure: goes quiet, avoids conflict, says yes while meaning no.

Needs: safety, time to respond, and to be asked directly.

Unlocks: trust, cohesion and care.

Owl

Precise, logical and thorough. Prefers data, detail and written clarity.

Under pressure: over-analyses and withdraws into detail.

Needs: information in advance and space to think.

Unlocks: quality, accuracy and early risk-spotting.

Peacock

Expressive, enthusiastic and story-driven. Thinks out loud.

Under pressure: talks more, loses focus on detail, seeks reassurance.

Needs: recognition, an audience and room for ideas.

Unlocks: energy, optimism and rallying people.

Eagle

Direct, fast and decisive. Gets to the point and focuses on results.

Under pressure: becomes blunt, impatient and over-controlling.

Needs: the headline first and clear ownership.

Unlocks: momentum and decisions made on time.

Education, continued

Making DOPE work

Map the team

Fewer Owls? Consider how the team manages detail. Look for clusters: A room of Eagles may favour quick decisions, so ensure every voice is heard.

Translate, don't judge

An Eagle's brevity is not rudeness. An Owl's silence is not disagreement. Sometimes what looks like conflict is simply a difference in communication preferences.

Flex on purpose

Peacocks lead with the headline for an Eagle. Eagles ask a Dove one more question. Owls send the detail ahead.

DOPE meets FISH

FISH! gives teams a shared language for how they choose to behave. DOPE helps them recognise that those behaviours may look different from person to person. One person might demonstrate Be There through active listening, while another shows Make Their Day through thoughtful preparation. The behaviours are shared, but how we express them can differ.

Track two

The six play styles



The most overlooked way to understand a team, and a key to unlocking every person in it.

The National Institute for Play describes six natural entry points into the state of play. How a person plays when the pressure is off often reveals how they do their best work when it is on.

Everyone carries all six. Most people have one or two that come easiest. There is no best style, and styles shift across the seasons of a life.

Opposites

Mover and Dreamer. Explorer and Organizer. Creator and Competitor. Opposites are where misunderstanding is most likely, and the most valuable pairings.

Play Styles is a framework of the National Institute for Play, of which Corporate Challenge Events is the exclusive Australasian partner. It is a self-discovery tool, not a clinical instrument, and results reflect a moment in time. Twenty-four subtypes sit beneath the six styles.

One challenge, six ways in

A program that offers a way in for all six styles reaches every person in the room, not only the loudest.

Style	How they might contribute	How to include them
Mover	Runs, builds, carries and keeps the energy physical.	Build in movement. Walking meetings and active formats, and no long seated briefings.
Explorer	Scouts options and tries something nobody else has.	Novel formats, open questions and room for small experiments.
Competitor	Pushes for the best result and tracks the score.	Clear goals and a fair, friendly scoring system.
Organizer	Plans, assigns roles and coordinates the team.	A clear structure to work within and run, and a real job inside the challenge.
Creator	Makes, performs and tells the story of the result.	Building and storytelling, and a stage or show-and-tell moment at the end.
Dreamer	May observe, reflect and offer perspectives others haven't considered.	Reflection time and quieter debriefs. Invite their observations and do not rush the quiet.

Turning understanding into strength

Support

Know what each person needs when things get hard, and offer it before being asked.

Deploy

Match people and tasks to strengths so the team stops spending energy compensating for the wrong fit.

Stretch

Create safe opportunities to practise outside the default, with the team cheering them on.

Styles describe preferences, not limits.

What good looks like

- People describe a teammate's styles accurately and respectfully.
- Conflict is called style difference, not personality problem.
- Teammates ask, "What do you need from me on this?"

Common pitfalls

- Boxing people in.
- A one-off profile with no follow-up.
- Leaders exempting themselves.
- Insights left abstract instead of one specific behaviour change.



03

Experience

Where do we get to feel and practise a great team?

Experience is the element that makes the other two feel real.

People don't necessarily change how they work together because they've been told to. Shared experiences give them opportunities to practise different behaviours, recognise strengths in one another and discover what they can achieve together.

A moment of genuine laughter, overcoming a challenge or seeing a colleague in a different light can become something a team remembers and builds on.
When designing team experiences, I look for four kinds of moments: Connection, Pride, Elevation and Insight.

Moment 1

Connection

"We are in this together."

Shared challenges that need every person, mixed groups, shared stories and genuine laughter.

Moment 2

Pride

"We did something we did not think we could do."

Stretch challenges with a visible result, recognition of individual contributions and a tangible outcome to point to.

Moment 3

Elevation

"A lift above the ordinary day-to-day."

Surprise, novelty, a change of environment and a moment of celebration that breaks the routine.

Moment 4

Insight

"I just saw something about us I had not seen before."

Facilitated debriefs, reflective builds and moments where behaviour in the game mirrors behaviour at work.

Choose the moments, then the program.

Different team experiences can create moments of Connection, Pride, Elevation and Insight, often in combination. The matrix below illustrates how different program types may support these moments. It's a guide to possibilities rather than a fixed formula. The right experience depends on what your team needs and how it is designed and facilitated.

Program type	Best for	Connect	Pride	Elevate	Insight
Collaborative building and creative challenges	Surfacing perspectives and giving quieter voices a way in. Includes LEGO-based facilitation.	●	○	○	●
Competitive or race-style challenges	Energy, rapid bonding and revealing how teams behave under time pressure.	●	●	●	○
Relaxed, social formats	Teams in change, feedback or restructure, where people need ease before depth.	●	○	●	○
Purpose-driven or community challenges	Meaning, giving and shared contribution beyond the team.	○	●	●	○
Facilitated reflection sessions	Turning an experience into agreed behaviour change.	○	●	○	●

Six principles for a high-impact experience

1 Start with the outcome

Decide which moments the team needs, then choose the program.

2 A way in for every style

Design challenges with different opportunities to contribute, recognising that people engage through movement, curiosity, competition, organisation, creativity and imagination.

3 Make the debrief part of it

The experience creates the raw material. Reflection turns it into learning.

4 Mirror the real work

The behaviour people show in the game should be recognisable at their desks.

5 Protect safety

Stretch is valuable. Humiliation is not. Design challenge, never exposure.

6 End on something tangible

A photo, a creation, a commitment or a shared story the team can retell.

The facilitator's job is to notice

Watch for the moment the agreed behaviour shows up, or fails to.

Name it gently in the debrief. That is the bridge back to Engagement and Education.

From Experience to Lasting Impact

Feel it. Understand it. Live it.

A meaningful team experience can create connection, shared memories and a fresh perspective on the people we work with.

Those moments have value in their own right. But when leaders take time to build on them, an experience can also become a starting point for positive change.

1 **Experience**

Feel it

Bring people together through a shared challenge, discovery or achievement. Create opportunities for them to connect, contribute and see one another beyond their usual working roles.

2 **Reflection**

Understand it

Help the team recognise what happened and what it revealed.

What surprised us? How did we work together? What strengths or behaviours did we notice that we don't always see at work?

A facilitated debrief can help turn those observations into meaningful conversations.

3 **Application**

Live it

Identify one thing worth taking back into everyday work.

It might be making more room for different perspectives, recognising quieter contributions or approaching challenges with greater curiosity.

Agree on a practical action and revisit it together.

What could this look like?

- During a team challenge, a group discovers that its best ideas emerge when everyone has an opportunity to contribute, not just those who speak first.
- In the debrief, the team recognises that its usual meetings don't always create that opportunity.
- Back at work, the leader introduces two minutes of individual thinking time before group discussions. At the next team meeting, they ask whether the change has helped.

The experience created the opportunity. Reflection helped the team recognise it. Application gave them something to build on.

Serious Fun, Lasting Impact

The experience doesn't have to end when the activity finishes. Sometimes, the most valuable part is what a team chooses to do next.

Want to create moments that matter for your team?

Speak with one of our Play Specialists about designing a meaningful team experience and building on what your people take away from it.

corpchallenge.co.nz

Where the parts meet

The power is in the overlaps

Each element has value in its own right. The opportunity lies in how they strengthen one another. When shared behaviours, greater understanding and meaningful experiences come together, teams have more opportunities to build the culture they want.

Engagement + Education

Understanding

Shared language lets people talk about difference without judgement. Self-awareness gives that language something real to describe.

"I know how you work, and I have words to say what I need."

Education + Experience

Insight

Learning is most powerful in action. When a team sees its own styles play out live in a challenge, the learning sticks.

"I read about it" becomes "I just saw it."

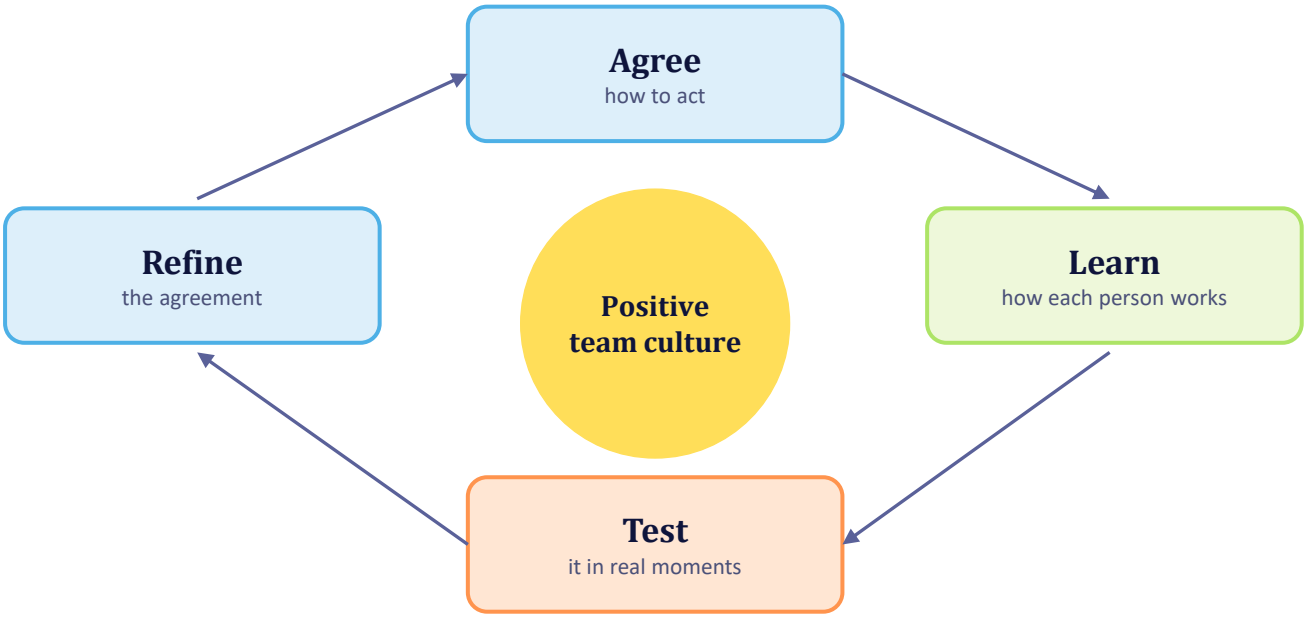
Engagement + Experience

Belonging

Agreed values become real when the team lives them together. Practising Be There, Play and Make Their Day inside a challenge makes the effect felt.

This is where values become culture.

The loop at the centre



When agreements are clear, understanding is deep and experiences are frequent and meaningful, a team develops a self-reinforcing loop. That loop separates teams that had a good workshop from teams that have a good culture.

The Environment supports the loop. A setting built for safety, presence and play speeds every turn of it.



Play

Play is the engine, not the garnish

Play creates opportunities for people to experiment, explore different approaches and connect with one another beyond their usual roles. It gives teams a way to see behaviours, relationships and learning in action.

But entering a play state is personal and voluntary. Leaders can create the conditions and opportunities for play, but they cannot force the experience. That means offering choice, recognising that people engage in different ways and creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable participating. What feels playful to one person may not feel that way to another.

How play shows up in each part

The Environment

An environment where people feel safe to experiment, challenge conventional thinking, explore new possibilities and learn from mistakes without fear of judgement.

Engagement

FISH puts Play into the shared vocabulary, so lightness becomes a skill the team practises on purpose.

Education

Play Styles help us understand what energises different people and how we can create opportunities for them to contribute in ways that feel natural and engaging.

Experience

Design experiences with opportunities for all six Play Styles, giving people a choice in how they participate rather than expecting everyone to engage in the same way.

Lightness is a skill, not a distraction.

The science behind it

Play isn't a luxury we grow out of. The National Institute for Play champions play as a public health necessity, recognising its importance to learning, emotional wellbeing and social connection throughout life. Research into play deprivation also raises important questions about what happens when opportunities to play are lost, particularly during development. For leaders, this matters. If play is fundamental to how we learn, adapt and connect, why do we so readily leave it out of adult working life?

Practical tips for leaders

What leaders do on Monday morning

Culture starts with leaders going first. These moves cost little and compound quickly.

The Environment

Set the conditions

- Change one thing about where the team meets this month.
- Open meetings with presence: phones away and a genuine check-in.
- Show your team that experimentation is encouraged by being willing to try something new yourself.

Engagement

Agree how to act

- Co-write three to five behaviours with the team, in observable terms.
- Use the FISH language first. Name Be There or Make Their Day when you see it.
- Run the new starter test: could they describe the agreement after a week?

Education

Understand each other

- Invite your team to share their DOPE communication preferences and explore how these differences influence the way they work together.
- Ask each teammate, “What do you need from me on this?”
- Flex on purpose: lead with the headline for an Eagle, send the detail ahead for an Owl.

Experience

Make it real

- Choose the moment the team needs before choosing the activity.
- Build the debrief in every time.
- End on something tangible: a photo, a creation or a commitment.

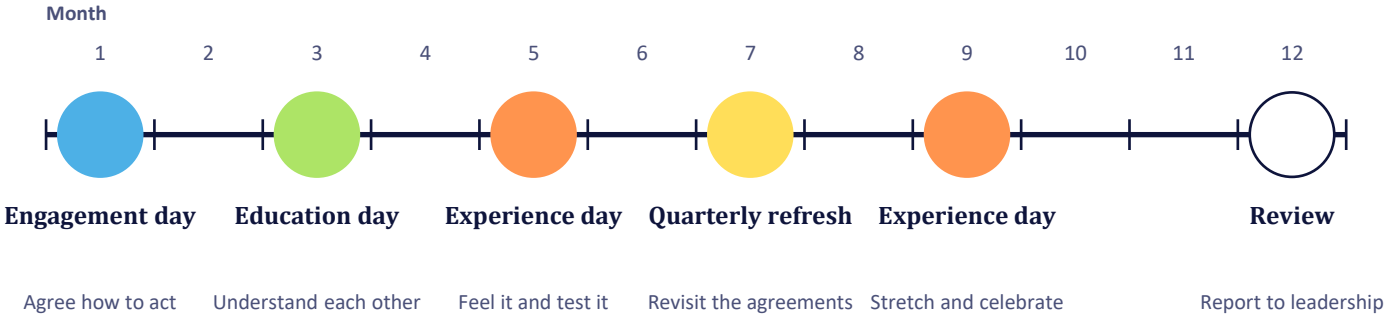
The leader’s test

Leaders who ask for the behaviours but do not model them first undermine the agreement.

Pick one move from each row. Do it first. Then ask the team to join.

A journey over twelve months

There is no single starting point for every team. Some need stronger shared behaviours, others greater understanding or connection. This example shows how Engagement, Education and Experience can work together over twelve months, allowing teams to practise, reflect and build on their progress.



All of it inside the Environment

An illustrative year. The number and timing of days is set to suit each team.

Adapting to your team

Teams in change	Lead with a relaxed, social Experience and a light Engagement conversation. People need ease before depth.
New or merged teams	Emphasise Engagement early to build shared language fast.
High performers who have plateaued	Consider leading with Education. The team may already work well together but have opportunities to better understand and use one another's strengths.
Remote or hybrid teams	Design Experience moments deliberately and keep the shared language visible in everyday tools.

How to know it is working

Engagement

"I know how my team has agreed to work together."

Education

"I understand how my teammates prefer to communicate."

Experience

A post-event pulse on connection, pride and insight, and what people remember three months later.

Four questions, one starting point

Score each question from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). The weakest answer tells you where to start.

The Environment

Do the conditions around us, from our spaces to our leaders, make it easy to put Engagement, Education and Experience into practice?

1 2 3 4 5

Start with: read your Environment (page 11).

Engagement

Do we know how we have agreed to behave?

1 2 3 4 5

Start with: co-write three to five behaviours (page 13).

Education

Do we understand how each of us works and plays?

1 2 3 4 5

Start with: map the team and ask what each person needs (page 15).

Experience

Do we regularly share moments that make us proud, connected and curious?

1 2 3 4 5

Start with: choose the moment before the activity (page 18).

See it in action

The easiest way to feel the model is to run it.

A Culture Spark is a short diagnostic conversation, a single experience and a facilitated debrief that introduces the model. Talk to us at corpchallenge.co.nz.

Resources

Resources and further reading

Where to explore the thinking in this book, and the practical tools that go with it.

The science of play

Research and education

National Institute for Play (NIFPlay)

Research and education exploring the importance of play in human development, learning, wellbeing and social connection. Its work includes play as a public health necessity and the implications of play deprivation.

nifplay.org

Free assessment

Play Styles

Explore the six Play Styles and how understanding individual play preferences can support self-awareness, motivation and team connection.

playstyles.nifplay.org

Explore the 3Es in practice

Education

Free DOPE Personality Test

Discover your communication preferences and explore how different styles influence the way people work together.

corpchallenge.co.nz/project/dope-test

Education

NIFPlay and Play Styles

Explore the science of play, understand the six Play Styles and discover how they can be applied in the workplace.

corpchallenge.co.nz/nifplay-the-national-institute-for-play-in-new-zealand-and-australia

Engagement

FISH! Philosophy

Explore four practical behaviours that help teams build stronger relationships and a more intentional workplace culture.

corpchallenge.co.nz/fish

The power of play

The Science of Play

Understand why play matters for adults and its role in learning, connection, adaptability and wellbeing.

corpchallenge.co.nz/project/science-of-play

Further learning

The Play Lab

Explore expert-led conversations, recordings and practical insights into play, leadership and team engagement.

corporatechallenge.com.au/project/play-lab

Acknowledgements and references

Framework acknowledgements

The original 3Es

Education, Engagement and Environment, developed by Dwain Richardson at Corporate Challenge Events.

FISH! Philosophy

Developed by John Christensen and ChartHouse Learning. Delivered by CCE as an accredited FISH! provider.

DOPE communication styles

The Dove, Owl, Peacock and Eagle (DOPE) personality framework was developed by Dr Gary Couture, drawing on William Moulton Marston's DISC behavioural model.

Play Styles

Developed by the National Institute for Play, of which Corporate Challenge Events is the exclusive regional licensing partner.

Selected references

Sources for the research claims about play in this book (page 21).

1. Panksepp, J. (1998). *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions.* Oxford University Press.
   Supports: play as one of seven primary emotional systems in the brain.

2. Panksepp, J., & Biven, L. (2012). *The Archaeology of Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions.* W. W. Norton.
   Supports: play as one of seven primary emotional systems in the brain.

3. Brown, S., with Vaughan, C. (2009). *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul.* Avery.
   Supports: the personal play histories gathered by Dr Stuart Brown.

A note on sources

The 3Es Evolved is CCE's own framework, drawn from its practice. The references support the research claims about play. Play Styles is a self-discovery tool, not a clinical instrument.

Where to start

Start with the people in the room. Take the DOPE test and the Play Styles assessment, share the results, then use the team diagnostic on page 24 to decide where to begin.

About the author

Shane Rakich

Author



Shane Rakich leads client experience at Corporate Challenge Events, bringing a practical understanding of how teams communicate, collaborate and respond to challenges.

Through The 3Es Evolved, Shane builds on CCE's established philosophy to explore how shared behaviours, greater understanding and meaningful experiences contribute to positive team culture.

Foreword

Dwain Richardson

Dwain Richardson is the general manager of Corporate Challenge Events and the originator of the original 3Es philosophy of Education, Engagement and Environment.

About Corporate Challenge Events

Established in 1994, Corporate Challenge Events is a leading provider of play-based team-building experiences across New Zealand and Australia.

With more than three decades of experience, CCE helps organisations strengthen connection, collaboration and team performance through thoughtfully designed experiences and educational workshops.

CCE is the exclusive regional licensing partner of the National Institute for Play.

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