

# Building a new team — How Zurich successfully merged two teams into one

*Merging two departments can lead to conflict and discord between members. In anticipation of this, Zurich worked with Mandarina to facilitate a smooth transition.*

Luana Ayer

**Industry:** Insurance

**Company:** Zurich Insurance Group

**Role:** Human Resources

## CHALLENGE

### Merging two departments into one

In 2020 Zurich was about to go through a big change in its internal structure. The international insurance company would be merging two of their most significant departments -- retail and bank insurance.

For successful and seamless integration, the leadership teams from both departments had to be willing to collaborate and adapt. However, with different communication styles and work methods, collaboration would be a challenge. Zurich ran the risk of creating **competition and rivalry** amongst the leaders; keeping them working independently from each other.

This is when Luana, contacted Cristina from Mandarina to prepare and facilitate the creation of a new team.

## SOLUTION

### Team Building with Mandarina

Mandarina started this project by talking with Luana and Zurich's executive director to assess their needs, objectives and create a plan. With this information, she custom-created **two team-building sessions**. One for the executive director and heads of department, and the second with the full leadership team.

*"The plan was very customized to our needs. She understands our needs and unloads your brain to get ideas I didn't even know I had."*

Each session was programmed to be four hours long and in a virtual format to accommodate during the pandemic.

*"At first I thought, how are we going to do a team activity through Zoom? How are we going to do that? But it was so nice, we didn't lose quality because it was virtual."*

The team-building sessions had three elements:

- **Briefing:** Cristina started by guiding a conversation between the members to talk about their needs and concerns. She created a safe space where everyone was encouraged to openly share their thoughts.
- **Activity:** With various activities, the group worked together towards a main goal. One of those activities was paint-scape. Each member was given paint and paper with a guide to paint an image. Once everyone put their final paintings together, the group saw how each painting formed part of the "big picture."
- **Debriefing:** Moderated and guided by Cristina, the team discussed what worked well, what didn't, and how it all affected the final result. The team formed their own conclusions.

At the end of the session, the group got a visual representation of the value that each member adds to the team, and how they can work together to achieve a common goal.

*"It was very nice to show them how they can ask for things, how they can agree and disagree, and how they can work together as a team for the same goal."*

## RESULTS

A new team to work for a common goal

Mandarina's team-building sessions achieved their purpose: to **facilitate the merging of both teams into one.**

Zurich's new team understands each others' strengths and how to use them to their benefit. They know what to ask from each other and how to ask. And, even though they might not always agree on everything, they now have the tools to communicate and collaborate.

*"The best part is that they are now one team and they understand that they need to work for one big goal. And, they know how to ask things from each other"*

Since the team merger in September of 2020, the team is still applying everything they learned from Mandarina's team building session.

*"I will keep going over and over to Mandarina because they do a good job for me. They are my favorite consultant"*

Get in touch for a complimentary consultation and learn what I can do to help your groups.

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