

Business develops new challenge at resort.

* Course fosters team building and professional growth.

Jackson's business community is at last joining the rest of the country in a movement to bring more team-building and personal development into the workplace.

With their business Grand Dynamics, Inc. brothers Tim and Todd Walther have designed cutting-edge, team building programs that take groups out of their traditional environment to challenge them mentally and physically and encourage professional growth.

Grand Dynamics has been in business for a year and a half, and in that time the Walthers have traveled around the country organizing and facilitating team-building programs. This summer, they worked out an arrangement with the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort to use the mountain as a course for the newest service- The All Mountain Challenge. "Our organization has used their services in the past, said Sue Mason, special events manager for the resort. "We are supportive of growth of businesses in the village, and we think the relationship will be beneficial to us with corporate groups their services will bring in."

The Challenge course is a customized program that leads teams through courses from the top of Rendezvous Peak. The Challenge is designed to improve individual confidence, self esteem and self awareness, while increasing team skills like communication, trust and familiarity.

"Taking people out of their natural environment levels the playing field," Todd said. "The president of the company had the same set of skill and knowledge that everyone else has."

The All Mountain Challenge is a day involving problem solving situations that can be adapted to meet the physical ability level of any group. Grand Dynamics offers five different courses that range in difficulty to meet the need of the groups participating. "That is where the customization comes in," Tim said "Our courses fit a wide range of ability levels and expectations. According to Todd, "We will make it challenging for whoever is doing it."

The courses begin in the morning at the top of the tram. Each team, accompanied by a facilitator, navigate their way down the mountain. The groups negotiate their way through chutes, rocks, cliff bands, couloirs and a variety of other obstacles.

Along the way there are checkpoints where the facilitator will present a group challenge. Those activities are focused on things that make the group work as a team.

One exercise uses a Tyrolean Traverse. In this activity, the team builds a rope bridge across a ravine, with an option to then cross the ravine on the newly built structure. Each member has roles and instructions, and the exercise clearly illustrates teamwork and understanding a systems perspective.

"These types of shared bonding experiences are a unique framework for coworkers to get to know each other and increase the ease of working together," Tim said.

The Walthers said they hope to develop more local business from their new course. They are busy continuing other programs they coordinate, including conducting group scenic and whitewater river courses and scheduling fall group retreats and business planning meetings.

To learn more about Grand Dynamics, visit their website at www.granddynamics.com.