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Business Retreats

The Most Important Questions for Teams Seeking Clarity



Most teams spend too much time operating in execution mode.

Meetings follow meetings. Decisions are postponed. Ideas remain fragmented. In day-to-day business, there is often little room for strategic thinking and honest, unplanned conversations. Especially in an era of remote work and digital meetings, shared experiences and genuine human connection are becoming increasingly important.

A well-designed retreat creates distance from daily operations. It brings people together, creates space for open discussions, diverse perspectives, and clear decision-making. Often, it is exactly there that something emerges which is often missing in everyday business: honest conversations and shared responsibility.

That is precisely why business retreats are becoming increasingly relevant.

However, not every change of location automatically creates a successful retreat. Clear objectives, the right atmosphere, focus, and the quality of conversations are what truly matter.

The following questions are among the most important ones teams should ask themselves before planning a business retreat.

1. Why half a day is almost never enough

The most important conversations rarely begin within the first hour.

A good retreat needs time:

- to step out of operational mode
- to build trust
- to encourage open discussions
- to think strategically

That is why overnight retreats are often far more effective than traditional one-day workshops.

Often, the most valuable conversations happen:

- at dinner
- during a walk in nature
- between two sessions
- or late in the evening at the bar

Not in the official meeting room.



In practice, one to two days have proven ideal for many teams: long enough for depth, short enough to maintain focus.

2. What goals can a business retreat achieve?

A retreat needs a clear purpose.

Without a shared expectation, even the best agenda becomes ineffective.

Typical objectives include:

- strategic alignment
- decision-making
- leadership alignment
- team development
- innovation and ideation
- change management
- culture and values work
- annual planning or budgeting

What matters is not the number of topics, but the clarity of priorities.

A good retreat rarely solves everything.

But it creates focus on what matters most.

3. What makes a retreat different from a regular meeting?

A retreat creates a different way of thinking.

In everyday business, teams often only react to:

- emails

- appointments
- operational challenges

A retreat creates distance from that.

This often leads to:



- better conversations
- more open discussions
- new perspectives
- stronger trust
- decisions instead of endless feedback loops

Less presentation.

More thinking.

Less information.

More clarity.

4. Why is the location more important than many people think?

Environment influences behaviour.

People think differently when:

- they have peace and quiet
- they feel comfortable
- they are not constantly interrupted
- the atmosphere creates trust
- they are attentively supported

The right location supports:

- concentration
- openness
- creativity
- stronger team connection

A great retreat location is far more than just infrastructure.

It sets the tone for the entire experience.

At Hotel de Londres, meeting planners and their guests particularly appreciate the combination of easy accessibility and an atmosphere that is rarely found in traditional conference hotels.

From much of Switzerland, you can reach Brig in about two hours. Once you arrive, focused meetings, conversations in the Wohnstuba and breaks on the sun terrace flow naturally from one to the next. And at our 24-hour Honesty Bar, something many teams already know often becomes clear: the best conversations do not always happen in the meeting room, but when people have the time to listen and enjoy each other's company without feeling rushed.



Perhaps it is the house. Perhaps it is the mountains. Most likely, it is both.

5. Why do retreats in the mountains work particularly well?

Distance creates perspective.

The mountains offer something that is often lost in everyday life:
Peace.

Fewer distractions.
Fewer interruptions.
More focus.

Many teams experience outside the office:

- more open discussions
- better concentration
- greater creativity
- stronger human connection

Not despite the environment — but because of it.

In Brig, the gateway to the Alps, with 45 four-thousand-metre peaks on the doorstep, it often takes no more than a glance outside to put things back into perspective.

Against this backdrop, some challenges suddenly seem a little smaller. What truly matters becomes much clearer.

That is precisely why retreats are often more than meetings in a different location. They create the space for a change of perspective — something that is all too often missing in the pace of everyday life.

6. How many participants are ideal?

Smaller groups usually work more effectively.

In many retreats, the ideal group size is between 4 and 12 participants.

Larger groups often lead to:



- passive participation
- less openness
- longer discussions
- unclear decisions
- reduced genuine involvement

The more sensitive or strategic the topics, the more important a manageable setting becomes.

Quality rarely comes from size.

7. How do you structure a retreat effectively?

An effective retreat needs structure — but not overplanning.

The best formats combine:

- focused work sessions
- open conversations
- reflection time
- shared meals
- intentional breaks
- lightness and shared experiences

What matters is a clear flow:

- Which topics are currently most important?
- Which decisions need to be made?
- What should be different by the end?

A full calendar does not automatically create a good retreat.

Often, the most valuable insights emerge in the quieter moments in between.

8. What role does food play in a retreat?

Food directly influences energy, concentration, and mood.

Especially during intensive working days, the culinary concept becomes an important part of the overall experience. Food and drinks can support focus, improve mental performance, reduce stress, and restore energy. As the saying goes, we eat with our eyes first — thoughtful presentation contributes to both the atmosphere and a sense of wellbeing.



What works well:

- light lunches
- high-quality regional products
- seasonal cuisine
- balanced menus
- uncomplicated comfort food in the evening

Shared meals often create exactly the conversations that daily business leaves little room for — more personal, more open, and beyond the agenda.

It is also essential to consider:

- allergies
- dietary preferences
- individual needs

Thoughtfulness is often reflected in the details.

9. Why do many retreats fail?

The most common reasons are surprisingly similar:

- no clear objective
- too many topics at once
- lack of decisions
- overloaded agendas
- the wrong participant mix
- no follow-up

Many retreats create discussions — but no direction.

A successful retreat needs:

- focus
- priorities
- clarity
- accountability
- trust
- team cohesion



Fewer topics often lead to better outcomes.

10. Does a retreat need external moderation?

Not always. But it often helps significantly.

External facilitation creates:

- neutrality
- structure
- focus
- stronger discussion leadership

Especially in situations involving:

- conflicts
- strategic decisions
- change processes
- leadership topics

an external facilitator can make a critical difference.

Because great facilitation is not about providing answers.

It is about making the right conversations possible.

11. Why many good retreats fade away in daily business

The real challenge often begins after the retreat.

Back in everyday work, teams are quickly overtaken again by:

- meetings
- emails
- operational topics

- old habits
- endless coordination loops
- unspoken hierarchies
- lack of follow-through
- responsibility being pushed upward again
- day-to-day business taking over



That is why it requires:

- clear ownership
- concrete next steps
- shared priorities
- consistent follow-up
- regular check-ins
- accountability

A good retreat does not end when people leave.

It ends with implementation afterwards.

12. Is a retreat just a team event?

No.

A team event creates shared experiences.

A retreat creates space for conversations, reflection, and shared responsibility — and in doing so, strengthens relationships.

Both can be valuable.

But their purpose is different.

A good retreat combines:

- human connection
- honest exchange
- strategic thinking
- shared time away from daily routines

That is exactly where its strength lies.

13. When is the right time for a retreat?

Retreats are especially valuable during phases of:

- change
- growth
- uncertainty
- strategic repositioning



For example:

- before important decisions
- during leadership transitions
- in periods of growth
- before budgeting or strategy processes
- after intense project phases
- during cultural change

Often, distance is needed to see clearly again.

The right moment is usually earlier than teams think.

Final thought

Great retreats do not simply create better meetings.

They create space:

- for clarity
- for honest conversations
- for new perspectives
- for shared direction

Because the most important decisions rarely happen between two meetings.

They happen where people truly have the time to think together and listen to one another.