

# Inspiring Interactions

## Team Building Handbook

### 33 Fun Do-It-Yourself Activities





# Great Results!

For over 20 years, Sean Glaze has helped team leaders improve morale, inspire collaboration, and develop Rapid Teamwork.

As a conference keynote speaker and professional event facilitator / trainer, Sean is uniquely qualified to share these **fun** and **effective** team building activities and secrets, because he has used them all successfully with past clients.

Inside these pages you will get powerful facilitator secrets and specific step-by-step instructions that will ensure your next meeting activity is a HIT!

As a manager, administrator, coach, or leader of any group, you will see a significant benefit from team building...

*All successful leaders know - It is much easier for people to work together if they have laughed together first!*

## Praise for Sean`s Programs

*“Thank you so much for facilitating our annual staff meeting! The Great Results Teambuilding event was better than we anticipated. Our people **laughed, participated, and encouraged each other** more at this event than any we’ve had in our long history of annual staff meetings.”*

- Michele Lurvey, [Traverse Dental Associates](#)

*“It was an amazing experience for all involved, and we are still feeling that **sense of camaraderie** to this day! Thank you for a great event. Thanks, again, for your sharing with us your expertise... The morale is still high!”*

- Sherry Crawford, [Wakeland High School](#)

*“I laughed so hard at times, my stomach hurt! The exercises were very creative and encouraged everyone to participate... it brought us together, in teams and as a whole, to come up with solutions or showed us why **communication and teamwork are critical** to success.”*

- Nicole Stroupe, [Ivan Allen Workspace](#)

*“Sean facilitated a 3 hour team building workshop for my company’s annual kick-off event. His personal experience as a coach and perspective on what makes teams great was inspiring. Plus, his variety of out-of-your-seat activities **kept my team active, engaged and smiling.**”*

- Kelly Clark, [Director of Marketing at MDI Group](#)

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ISBN 978-0-9962458-9-0

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*“The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime.”*

- Babe Ruth

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*“If you want creative workers,  
give them enough time to play.”*

- John Cleese



# Why Team Building?

Team building is about creating relationships and connections and awareness to improve interactions. Ultimately, team building is about the soft skills that many leaders neglect to invest in developing.

Strategy is important, but a strong culture is vital. Too many people are hired for technical skill and fired for interpersonal skills.

*In fact, you may not be aware that:*

***“Retention increases up to 800% if humor is used when presenting.”***

*- Avner Ziv, Ph.D., Contemporary Educational Psychology.*

***“Experiential learning is an anchor for cognitive material. Participants have a kinesthetic imprint... because the learning is graphic as it involves physical, mental and behavioral dimensions.”***

*- Dr John Luckner and Reldan Nadler. Sabre Corporate Development*

***“Organizations that communicate effectively are 4.5x more likely to retain the best people.”***

*-Watson Wyatt, Worldwide Consulting Firm*

***“60% of executives listed lack of collaboration as one of their top leadership challenges.”***

*- American Management Association*

This handbook is a collection of 30 powerful and enjoyable activities and exercises that I have used with corporate, athletic, and educator groups to boost morale, inspire collaboration, and create a sense of community.

Many of the activities were adapted from other manuals I have used, workshops I have attended, or mentors I have learned from.

There are a few original activities, and a few that I found were more effective and relevant after modifying the experience – but each activity includes a GOAL (common outcomes and objectives), a list of required MATERIALS, and detailed INSTRUCTIONS for successfully leading your group through the activity.

One idea you will want to go into any event facilitation with is that every group is different... but all groups grow stronger when given the time and opportunity to build relationships and awareness.

Susan Yoculan, of the University of Georgia Gymnastics Team, shares an interesting perspective on team building activities:

*“We train 13 hours a week in the gym, less than any [other] team in the country. And we’ve done that for over ten years.*

*We spend the other [NCAA-allowed seven hours] having meetings. We meet as a team for an hour and a half a week, then we meet individually. We put a lot of time into building our team cohesiveness, instead of just letting it go on, or not...*

*Lots of coaches talk about team chemistry, but you have to put the time into it if you’re serious about it. And we’re very serious about it—I think it’s more important than training in the gym. You only have 20 hours [of time allowed by the NCAA] and if you spend it all in the gym, then when do you work on team building? It doesn’t just happen.”*

Coach Yoculan’s teams won 16 SEC Championships and won 10 NCAA Women's Gymnastics championships – in 1987, '89, '93, '98, '99, '05, '06, '07, '08, and '09. Much of her success she credits to team building.

When working to create a solid and successful culture of teamwork in any organization, there is a need to establish trust among team members.

This begins with learning to communicate effectively and appreciate teammate strengths...

A sense of unity is one of the most powerful feelings your team could enjoy, and is available to leaders who inspire cohesiveness and a commitment to building teamwork through experiential activities.

Experiential activities are proven to be the single most effective way to increasing success and group effort, whether it is for your classroom, your

business or your athletes. It has been proven that TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES are an effective way to reduce stress, improve attitudes and get your group to learn how to work together toward team goals.

When change occurs in any organization (school administration, office management, or coaching staff) there is always a need to focus on building teamwork and clarifying team goals to build trust and morale that will ultimately help your group reach team goals –

Experiential team building challenges are fun, memorable, and effective tools for quickly improving your team's trust and accountability – they foster relationships and develop leadership skills... and provide a tremendous return on your investment!

Congratulations on your initiative to purchase this handbook - most of the benefits your group will enjoy from our time together at any teambuilding event will be difficult to measure, but impossible to deny!

You will see more smiles, conversations and camaraderie.

You will see more rapport and acceptance of roles, and you will see more peer accountability and clarity of a shared vision of success.

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## **\*The Disclaimer**

(Yep, it has to be said...) Great Results Teambuilding, its facilitators, heirs, contractors, and associates will not be held responsible, or otherwise legally bound in any way, for any bodily or emotional injury or death that may result from use of the information contained herein.

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*“You can discover more about  
a person in an hour of play than  
in a year of conversation.”*

- Plato

# A Checklist for Facilitating Any Team Building Activities:

- ✓ Be enthusiastic - whatever happens, make it fun!
- ✓ Choose volunteers carefully and never cause embarrassment.
- ✓ Ask questions and listen to gain understanding
- ✓ Keep safety your first concern – physical and emotional
- ✓ If something is not working, move on to the next activity.
- ✓ Make all activities “challenge by choice” instead of mandatory.
- ✓ Encourage people to think creatively -
- ✓ Finish each activity while your people are still enjoying it.



## So, what will your people learn?

- ~ Do you lead or follow - and when?
- ~ Do you follow rules or bend them?
- ~ Do you speak up or listen first?
- ~ Do you see the big picture or focus on details?
- ~ Do you communicate effectively with others?
- ~ Do you choose to have fun, even in adversity?
- ~ Do you handle frustration well?
- ~ Do you appreciate other's talents or go it alone?
- ~ Do you take responsibility or find others to blame?
- ~ Do you respect and value your teammates' opinions?
- ~ Do you find ways for everyone to win?
- ~ Do you have a positive or a destructive inner voice?
- ~ Do you focus on problems or solutions?





# DEBRIEFING IDEAS

# Why Discuss Debriefing First?

As Stephen Covey said, you should always “**begin with the end in mind.**”

Each of the activities in this book are only useful to the extent that they translate to improved awareness and changed behaviors in your organization – and it is the debriefing discussions that follow each activity where the real value of team building is found.

Have you ever seen a magician pull a rabbit out of his or her hat?

That rabbit was there all along – but the magician likely went through a very entertaining or even interactive set of activities and comments that led up to the moment the rabbit actually appeared.

Team building activities are certainly entertaining and interactive, but they only become worthwhile and impactful if they are followed by debriefing questions. Much like the magician would tell you, the rabbit only appears if someone reaches in and pulls it out.

Debriefing questions are the part of your team building event where you help your people to pull out their rabbits.

These discussions provide an opportunity for your people to reflect on their team building activity and make it meaningful by acknowledging what was learned about themselves, about others, and about their interactions – and then identify how those lessons can be applied to improve their leadership or listening or collaborative skills in the future.

A facilitated debriefing discussion should follow the completion of each separate activity or group challenge.

The magic of a true team building activity is in the thought provoking and safe discussions that are produced by meaningful questions that connect their experiences to relevant issues or team improvement needs.



A more mature group will often begin to lead their own discussion with relatively little prompting from the facilitator, and can find many insightful connections or meaning from an experience.

Less established groups, or those that may not yet have established a safe level of trust, may require more time or encouragement to reach similar “A-Ha” moments. With either type of group, the goal of debriefing discussions is to help them find personal and relevant conclusions by reflecting on their experiences and considering its applications.

**Your debriefing questions will generally follow a sequence of:**

### **I. WHAT?**

For virtually any and all team building activities, you can begin with these questions to focus on the activity and participant experiences:

1. Describe your experience – what happened?
2. Can you be more specific, or explain it another way?
3. Why were you successful (or not)?

### **II. SO WHAT?**

Following the discussion of “what happened,” you can then move on to finding value or insights from the experience by using these questions:

1. What is the number one take-away from this?
2. How were differences in opinion handled?
3. What did you discover about yourself during the activity?

### **III. NOW WHAT?**

Following the “so what?” discussion, you should be able to flow smoothly into questions that apply those ideas to future projects or interactions:

1. How is this like something that occurs in our workplace?
2. What does this activity suggest about our daily actions at work?
3. What will we do differently as a result of our insights?

# Debriefing Suggestions

In addition to the popular formula of what, so what, and now what, you (as the facilitator) may also employ a few other strategies for helping your people draw out a few rabbits of their own.

Perhaps you will ask some of the participants to be observers, and provide them a task or question such as sharing what they noticed that perhaps the participants did not...

Perhaps you might ask each participant to make notes on index cards to assist them in processing their thoughts.

It often helps to have people write down ideas and then discuss in pairs to shares as a more comfortable small-group conversation prior to initiating a whole group discussion...

Perhaps you will want to *bring a “koosh” ball* or funny object to toss around, so that participants can answer a predetermined question or can share their thoughts when they catch it...


One other helpful tool is to observe and *tell a brief story* of what you saw happening during the activity to remind participants of the experience. This can often draw out a few new comments and spark extra insights.

Regardless of the strategy used, your day will become much more than a fun experience if your facilitator helps your people to make the debriefing questions a relevant consideration of how the activities and their lessons can be applied to your specific circumstances...

## A Few Helpful Reminders:

1. The facilitator will encourage everyone to listen well, and will validate questions or comments by either expanding on or challenging them.
2. The facilitator will set no time limit for debriefs. Good discussions require time for warming up, reflection, maximum input, and closure.
3. Repeating what the participant said to help reiterate a point, or open a discussion is a useful tool that can be a catalyst for other comments.
4. The facilitator will try to arrange participants in a circle because eye contact and “equal seating” encourages more open discussions.
5. The facilitator should pause often. Quiet allows people to think and reflect on earlier points or formulate their own thoughts on the topic.
6. If participants appear apathetic at first, the facilitator may question people by name or go around the room in a sequence.



A green rectangular sticky note with a folded bottom-right corner, containing the text "QUICK ICEBREAKERS" in white, bold, uppercase letters.

# **QUICK ICEBREAKERS**

# Why Use Quick Icebreakers?

Icebreakers can play an important role in helping young people integrate and connect with one another in a group environment.

They can also enhance your meetings by helping to stimulate discussion, cooperation, and participation by:

- Helping a new group get to know one another.
- Helping new members to integrate into a group.
- Helping young people feel comfortable together.
- Encouraging cooperation.
- Encouraging listening to others.
- Encouraging working together.
- Encouraging young people to break out of their cliques.
- Developing social skills.
- Building a rapport with leaders.
- Creating a good atmosphere for learning and participation.

# Icebreaker Activities

## **FAVORITE T-SHIRT**

GOAL: getting to know each other, sharing background information

MATERIALS: Ask attendees to bring their favorite T-shirt to the meeting.

INSTRUCTIONS: Once all participants have arrived, ask each person to show the shirt to the group and explain how the T-shirt best resembles their personality or reveals something unique about their experiences.

# Icebreaker Activities

## **WALLET INTRODUCTIONS**

**GOAL:** To find out some unique information from people through the contents of their purse or wallet.

**MATERIALS:** Access to their purse or wallet

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask people to take out three things from their wallet that represents something they value.

Have each person share those things. For a more challenging version: ask them to find something with their full legal name on it, the oldest thing they have, something that has expired, a dated picture and something you would not think to find in a wallet or purse.

# Icebreaker Activities

## CONNECT FOUR

GOAL: To find out what we share in common with others on the team

MATERIALS: paper

INSTRUCTIONS: This is a good exercise for any size group, but they should be divided into groups of 4-6 people before you begin.

It is fun for building trust and helping team members to get to know each other better. The group can stand or sit in a circle.

As facilitator, explain you will give the group a topic, and each person must share four different answers. Each person in the group will repeat the process, until all group members have shared their own four answers to the question or topic. For example – the facilitator may ask the team members to start by naming, in turn, four places that they have visited.

Continue the session with additional subjects. It's best to start with safe subjects — like 'places you have visited' — and increase the relevance as you progress. Other possible subjects are:

- Jobs you have had.
- Things you are good at.
- Things that you find difficult.
- Things that embarrass you.
- Things you like.
- Things you dislike.



# Icebreaker Activities

## **DESERT ISLAND**

GOAL: sharing personalities and communicating values

MATERIALS: index cards and pens or pencils

INSTRUCTIONS: Announce, 'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book (which is not the Bible) and one luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island! What would you take and why?'

Allow a few minutes for the young people to write down their list of three items on an index card before sharing their choices with the rest of the group. As with most icebreakers and relationship building activities, it's good for the group leaders to join in too!

# Icebreaker Activities

## **RUBBER BAND CHALLENGE**

GOAL: recognizing the need and benefit of asking for assistance

MATERIALS: rubber bands for each participant

INSTRUCTIONS: Very often in our jobs and our lives, we believe that we have to “do it myself,” as a young child might say. This exercise helps participants recognize that sometimes we CAN'T do it ourselves, and it is okay to ask for help.

An application where this has had great success is in any type of environment where participants are often reluctant to ask for help. This exercise can help them see that on their own, there is little chance they will be able to solve the problem. You'll need one 1 1/2 inch rubber band for each participant.

1. Give each participant a rubber band, and have them hang it from their right thumb. Ask participants to pull the rubber band along the back of their hand, then loop it over their little finger, bringing it down as far as it will go.
2. Then give them these instructions: “Your goal is to now get the rubber band OFF your little finger so that it is again just hanging from your thumb. However, you may not:

- Use your other hand, your teeth or any of your other body parts
- Use a table, chair, pen, or any other object.

Participants will often struggle with this for some time. After an appropriate time of struggle, say: “I did not say that you couldn't get help from another person.” They will then get the hint and have a partner help them remove the rubber band from their finger.

\*Check the size and tautness of the rubber bands — sometimes they will easily fall off, and you want the exercise to be somewhat difficult.

# Icebreaker Activities

## IF

GOAL: sharing values and personalities

MATERIALS: "IF" cards prepared beforehand, chairs for each person

INSTRUCTIONS: Ask the group to sit in a circle.

Write 15 'IF' questions on cards and place them (question down) in the middle of the circle. The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card.

This is a simple icebreaker to get your people talking and listening to others in the group. Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF' questions to add to the list...

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If I gave you \$10,000, what would you spend it on?
3. If you could watch your favorite movie now, what would it be?
4. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
5. If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?
6. If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?
7. If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?
8. If you could be someone else, who would you be?
9. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
10. If you could watch your favorite TV show now, what would it be?
11. If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?
12. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?
13. If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?
14. If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
15. If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?

# Icebreaker Activities

## WOULD YOU RATHER..?

GOAL: identifying personal preferences and sharing information

MATERIALS: masking tape (or duct tape)

INSTRUCTIONS: Questions may range from silly trivia to more serious content. On the way you might find out some interesting things about your young people! Place a line of tape down the center of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape.

When asked 'Would you rather?' they have to jump to the left or right as indicated by the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in too! I've included 15 starter questions, just add your own and let the fun begin. Would you rather..?

- Visit the doctor or the dentist?
- Eat broccoli or carrots?
- Watch TV or listen to music?
- Own a hamster or a snake?
- Have a beach holiday or a mountain holiday?
- Be invisible or be able to read minds?
- Be hairy all over or completely bald?
- Be the most popular or the smartest person you know?
- Make headlines for saving somebody's life or winning a Nobel Prize?
- Go without television or fast food for the rest of your life?
- Always be cold or always be hot?
- Not hear or not see?
- Be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you don't like?
- See the future or change the past?
- Be three inches taller or three inches shorter?

# Icebreaker Activities

## **ME, TOO!**

GOAL: Find things in common, talk to everyone in the group

MATERIALS: none

INSTRUCTIONS: Ask team members to find 5-10 (depending on the time frame) things they all have in common.

Challenge them to think creatively; places they have traveled, TV show they have watched, some other experience. The first group to come up with the designated number of things wins, points for creativity too!

# Icebreaker Activities

## **HUMAN KNOT**

GOAL: Problem solving, communication, and teamwork

MATERIALS: none

INSTRUCTIONS: The group forms a circle. Each person holds out their right hand and grasps another hand as if shaking hands. All then extend left hands and grab another left hand.

They should not have both hands of the same person or hands of the people on either side of them. The goal is to then untangle themselves into a single circle without releasing hands.

# Icebreaker Activities

## **CHOOSE TEN**

GOAL: understanding need for personal sacrifice at times

MATERIALS: five index cards, 5 \$10 bills, and 5 dimes

INSTRUCTIONS: This activity may cost you \$40, but It will help participants to explore the concept of volunteers dilemma and the bystander effect

Ask five of your participants individually vote on whether to receive 10 dollars or 10 cents. Each person will get what he or she chose, provided that at least ONE of them chooses the dime...

BEGIN by distributing the five pieces of paper to chosen volunteers. Make sure they are from different parts of the room, or perhaps previously identified by the event planner...

Ask the participants to SECRETLY decide whether they will request the dollars or cents, but they CANNOT talk with one another (although they are allowed to ask their neighbors for advice)

ANNOUNCE that each participant will get whatever he / she requested, AS LONG AS at least one of them requests a dime – and they cannot communicate their decision to anyone until revealed by facilitator

GIVE the participants 2 minutes to consider their decision, then have them write their request and their name on the paper, fold it and submit it...

DISCUSS the volunteer dilemma – someone must make a sacrifice so others can benefit. If more than one chooses the dime, it becomes a wasted sacrifice. HOW does the “somebody else will do it mentality hurt teams? How does this apply to your team?

# Icebreaker Activities

## **BROWN BAG DISCUSSION**

GOAL: To have an opportunity to discuss group issues in a fair way

MATERIALS: brown bag, pieces of paper or post-it notes

INSTRUCTIONS: Have each person write down, on a small piece of paper (or post-it) the topic that they think the group should discuss most. Have them fold the paper twice and deposit it in the bag.

Shake the bag and take turns drawing out a topic, reading it and discussing it. Make sure that the person who wrote the topic is satisfied with the discussion before you move on the next topic.

Remind people to use "I "statements.

**Variations:** Have the group write down questions to make it a an icebreaker, or write down different quotes and draw them out one at a time and talked about what they mean to the group.



# Icebreaker Activities

## **SOLVE MY PROBLEM**

GOAL: collaboration, creativity, and sharing ideas

MATERIALS: paper and a pen / pencil for each participant

INSTRUCTIONS: Arrange people into groups of 5-8.

Give each player a sheet of paper and a pen and ask them to sit in a circle. Have each player to write at the top of their paper a difficult problem that needs solving. The problems can be real or made up.

Have the players pass their papers to the next player in the circle. Then, have the players read the problem written on the paper and write a short solution under the problem. Solutions can be sincere OR humorous!

After everyone has written a solution to the problem, ask the players to fold the papers so that the problem is visible, but the solution is hidden.

Once the papers are folded, have the players pass them to the next player in the circle. Have those players write their solutions underneath, again folding before passing. Once the papers have been passed around to the original owner, have the person holding the paper read aloud the problem and all the advice.

The participants should get a few laughs and great advice!

# Icebreaker Activities

## DRAW THE LINE:

GOAL: emphasis on encouragement and pushing teammates

MATERIALS: tape, marker, and long large sheet of paper

INSTRUCTIONS: Place a large sheet of paper on the wall and ask a participant to join you in front of room... Ask short participant to draw line on paper taped to wall (give no other direction)

Stay busy with something else – allow line to be drawn low...

Explain – “no, that’s not what I meant. Try it a little higher ... draw a nice horizontal line”

“Nope, that’s not it! You aren’t listening... It needs to be a little higher try again...”

“You can get higher than that! Come on – get up on your tip toes and try again...”

“Okay – have you ever seen anybody really reach!? Try it again, see how high you can go!”

“Perfect – thank you! Excellent job! “...And that is the job of every teammate or manager!”

Our default behavior isn’t to stretch – Our job as teammates and leaders is to get more from teammates than they would otherwise think is possible...

# Icebreaker Activities

## **FACE TO FACE:**

GOAL: pure fun and interaction

MATERIALS: sharpies and index cards for all participants

INSTRUCTIONS: tell your participants to get up and mingle a bit... just walking around the room with their index card and sharpie.

Then, tell them to give a person nearby a high five, and that will be their partner for the activity. Then say:

“Now, In your pairs, FACE EACH OTHER – SHOULDERS SQUARE and standing face to face”

“Without looking down at your note card canvas, looking only at your partner’s face, I want you to draw the face of your partner.”

Tell them they have 1:00 to finish...

Last, have partners exchange pictures and allow all to walk around and share their portraits – you will see smiles everywhere!

# MAIN-COURSE EXERCISES

# Why Use Main-Course Exercises?

**Because telling is not teaching**, and does not inspire learning!

Einstein wrote “Knowledge is experience, everything else is just information.” Later, in the 1930's, John Dewey became famous for pointing out that the authoritarian, strict, pre-ordained knowledge approach of modern traditional education was too concerned with delivering knowledge, and not enough with understanding students' actual experiences.

According to Dewey, who became the champion of experiential education, “Learning takes place when a person involved in an activity looks back and evaluates it, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information...”

The return on your investment will be found in the changes in behaviors and focus in their day to day lives weeks after the activities.

Experiential team building activities are a powerful learning tool because they help to build a positive culture in five ways:

## 1. They Get Everyone is Involved:

The most effective way to learn something new skills is to actually do it. Remember the old saying- “I hear, I forget, I see, I remember, I do, I understand?” Research shows that when your people just sit and listen, they retain less than 20% of what they hear. When they are involved in active experiential learning they retain 90%!

## 2. They Offer Leadership Opportunities:

In every activity they will encounter, there is an opportunity for leadership. This aspect of the fun and challenging activities is always addressed in our debriefing discussions. It is important to recognize the personality types and strengths in your group, then everyone will be better equipped to lead from where they are when they experience real adversity.

### 3. They Are Safe and Fun Interactions:

The Experiential Learning activities shared in this handbook offer all participants a safe and fun atmosphere to risk, learn, share ideas, and make mistakes. There are no physically demanding tasks, so all of your people can participate and enjoy themselves!

### 4. They Build Knowledge and Relationships.

Team play allows your people to learn about each other and share laughter in a controlled situation. Knowing how each of them handles obstacles or frustration is invaluable – for each activity is itself a microcosm of the challenges your team may be facing. How do you communicate? What are your team personality types and individual strengths?

### 5. They Provide Relevant Take-Aways:

Teambuilding challenges do more than just build trust and relationships among your people – they offer lessons for more productive roles and can each be utilized to pinpoint and improve on the issues your team may be unwilling to address.



# Main-Course Exercises

## TRAFFIC JAM

GOAL: communication and leadership skills to solve a problem

MATERIALS: paper plates (or duct tape) to mark spots on floor

INSTRUCTIONS: set up a line of place markers (paper plates, duct tape), one for each person plus one extra. Split the group into two teams, and have them stand on a place marker with one open space in between them. Have each team facing toward the middle space.

The object is to have the groups exchange places in the same order on the opposite side of the open space. They may not touch anything but the markers and each other (imagine a hot lava flow).

The only "legal" moves are to an empty space in front of them and a person may move around a person who is facing them into an empty space.

The "illegal" moves include any move backwards, any move which involves two people moving at once. If at any time an "illegal move" is done or anyone steps off the markers, they must return to the starting position!

Start: [x] [x] [x] [x] [ ] [o] [o] [o] [o]

-----

End: [o] [o] [o] [o] [ ] [x] [x] [x] [x]

When time is up or they have completed the initiative, ask: *Who were the leaders of this activity? The followers? Did everyone feel involved?*

As an additional challenge, you can give them a time limit or make certain members mute and unable to talk.

# Main-Course Exercises

## A PROBLEM OF PERSPECTIVES

GOAL: to understand and appreciate different perspectives

MATERIALS: paper and pen / pencils

INSTRUCTIONS: Have your group sit in a circle, and ask each participant to think about a recent event that caused conflict or concern, then write out a 1 page story of where they were... Describe what was happening... The problem they experienced... What caused it - from their perspective... and What they chose to do about it...

- Then have them exchange papers to change perspective
- Have employees read management story and management read employee perspective
- Next, have them read story aloud from other perspective

How is it different from what they remember?

What did they not understand at the time?



# Main-Course Exercises

## TREASURE ROOM MAZE

GOAL: To get the entire team across the stones using only the "safe" path of stones and cross into the "treasure room."

MATERIALS: Twenty paper plates or duct tape as floor markings, a squeaky toy, and a facilitator map of the "safe" specified route

INSTRUCTIONS: Only the leader may refer to the map of the "safe" route.

As leader, you will use the "Squeaky" toy to sound when someone takes a wrong step onto a stone that is NOT part of the path combination. Any team member that takes a wrong step must return to the back of the team line and may not proceed until all other teammates have a turn.

Team members individually attempt to discover the safe route across the floor of stones to reach the treasure room on the other side...

There is a specific combination of "12" mandatory safe steps necessary for each participant to cross the stones, and only one person may be crossing the stones at any one time.

...As leader, you should provide the directions above and then say nothing until all team members have completed the activity successfully and are in the treasure room. Your only communication will be to "squeak" when they have mis-stepped and must go to the back of the line.

*\*A fun variation is to try the activity without talking to each other.*

*-this is a great time to point out the need for good communication!*

*-this requires teammates to assist and provide one voice for all!*

# TREASURE ROOM MAZE – SAFE ROUTE

TREASURE  
ROOM!



	11	12	
	10	9	
		7	8
2	3	4	6
	1		5



ENTRANCE

# Main-Course Exercises

## **LABEL STICK-UPS**

GOAL: Improved rapport, building connections and esteem

MATERIALS: a stack of enough blank labels for all participants

INSTRUCTIONS: Have one participant stand at the front of the room with his / her back to the team and ask the team to write down one positive statement about the person and stick it onto his / her back or arms

Next, take a picture of the person with his / her phone  
Have him / her sit down, then repeat this for all teammates

Talk about the importance of positive comments (research shows we function best when there is a ratio of 5 positive to 1 negative (5:1)  
Ask how often you share encouragements and build teammates up

To stay engaged and feel important, we must be reminded of our value, what we do well, and why we are part of the team...

The challenge is to go from thinking it to sharing it with them face to face!

# Main-Course Exercises

## ONE-TWO-THREE TEAM STORY

GOAL: Working together to create something, creativity and innovation

MATERIALS: None

INSTRUCTIONS: Arrange people into groups of 5. Have them stand side by side in a line and take turns telling a story that begins with the same word, chosen by you (the sillier, the better!).

Each person will only speak a certain number of words at a time on their turn. 1 word, 2 words, then 3 words, then 1 word, etc... For example, person one says, "Once." Person two says, "upon a." Person three says "time there was." Person four says "a." And so on.

Once you get to the end of the line, begin again at the start of the line. Stop the story when it has reached a satisfying ending.

Remind the players to always listen so they will be ready. Encourage them to be quick. This will help them to work together more efficiently as a team. Tell them to "sell" their word, make it sound important in the story.

Don't be afraid to put in a strange word, if it fits!

This is a great warm up game to teach people to work together to reach a goal, because no one person can be in control.

# Main-Course Exercises

## ROLES AND LABELS

GOAL: To observe how roles can play out in a group, examine roles people play and identify both the positive and negative aspects of roles.

MATERIALS: Post-it notes or stickers for labels

INSTRUCTIONS: Give each person a role to "wear" on their back or forehead. Ask them not to look at it, but put it on directly.

Tell the group that their task is to simply walk around and mingle with their teammates - Ask them to treat people according to their labels. Designate at least two observers, who will not participate in the task.

Have the participants begin the role-play, and let it go on as long as they need to clearly bring out some of the roles.

Facilitate a discussion with the following questions:

- What did you think your label said?
- How did it affect your participation?
- Are their labels in our group?
- How does it affect participation?

Potential labels to work with: "ignore me", "act surprised", "laugh at everything I say", "none of my ideas are good", "hang on my every word", "I confuse you", "tell me to shut up", "treat me like a kid", etc.

# Main-Course Exercises

## HUMAN ZIPPER

GOAL: increasing awareness, consideration, and courage

MATERIALS: none

INSTRUCTIONS: Tell participants - “Now, you will create two lines, facing each other, to stretch and curve around the room. Once you have your two lines facing each other, you need to put your hands out in front of you, in between their partner, so that they alternate.”

All arms should be held straight out...

Then say, “Next, I will need to have a volunteer.”

(Grab one person to start the activity) “Your job is to move through the gauntlet of arms, while the people who make the zipper are raising / lowering their arms to allow passage.

“Once this first person is halfway through, I will send the next person in line to follow – and then the next – continuing so on to create constant movement. Your job is to raise and lower your hands so they complete the journey UNTOUCHED by any hands or arms.”

After all have gone through the zipper, ask the group what the experience was like for them and how it relates to their work...

# Main-Course Exercises

## WARP SPEED

GOAL: to improve communication and increase productivity / efficiency

MATERIALS: three 'tennis ball sized' balls or throwable objects and a stopwatch or digital timer for recording success each round...

INSTRUCTIONS: Arrange your people in a circle. Have everyone put their right foot "inside" the circle and have them toss object 1 around the circle. Once they get the object, they must take their foot out of the circle, to show they've gotten the object and so they do not get it twice.

Give the group the other 2 objects (balls) and have the group continue the tossing pattern with all three, remembering who they are tossing it to each time and who they are getting the object from each time

Once the pattern is established, share the 3 rules with the group.

The 3 rules are:

- The pattern they establish must be kept for the entire activity.
- The balls must be passed and kept in order of 1-2-3.
- Each person must touch each ball at least once.

The team's task is to get the balls from the starting person, around the team, and back to the starting person in the fastest time possible.

After a few tries (remember to time each try), tell the team that they can probably do the activity in *under 10 seconds* with a group of 10-12.

The trick is, that they have to think outside the box to get the speed down to under 10 seconds. Remind them that they are allowed to try anything, as long as it does not violate any of the 3 rules...

# Main-Course Exercises

## **MAGIC CARPET**

GOAL: Dealing with change and successfully working with others

MATERIALS: A large tarp (10 X 10 for 10-12 people)

INSTRUCTIONS: Have the entire group stand on the tarp that's fully spread out on the floor. Their task is to flip the tarp over without anyone stepping off of the tarp in any way.

If someone steps off, the team has to begin all over again, regardless of where they are in the process.

Walk around the group as they work. If someone does step off, just say, "please go back and start over" without pointing at who stepped off.



# Main-Course Exercises

## ROPE STAR

GOAL: Improved leadership and communication skills

MATERIALS: 50 ft. rope (enough for all to hold a part of it)

INSTRUCTIONS: Have every member of the group stand in a circle and grab the rope with both hands. Tell them the only rule is that “no team member can remove either hand from the rope, although they can slide their hands to different areas of the rope while maintaining the soft grip.

Begin by telling the group that they will now work together to use the rope to create specific shapes, and then show ONE member of the group the first picture (a square).

They must talk and work together to create a perfect square (to your standards) to be successful. Once they get that done, tell them that there is now a more challenging shape they must create with the rope, and show ONE person the second diagram (a five pointed star).

This will cause much more frustration, but allows for a great debriefing on the importance of communication, listening, working together, etc...



diagram 1

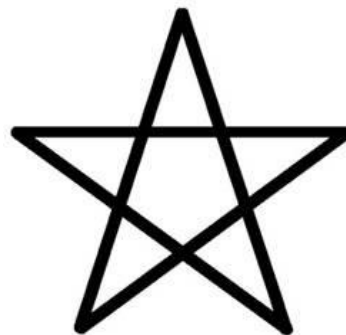


diagram 2

# Main-Course Exercises

## PERCEPTION CARDS

GOAL: increase awareness of how we see and treat others

MATERIALS: a deck (or two) of cards (enough for all participants)

INSTRUCTIONS: For our next activity, you will start in a circle... I will place a deck of cards face down on the floor. Your job is to grab a card (without looking at it), and then hold it against your forehead so that everyone *except you* can see what the card is... (illustrate)

Next, give participants the following direction: “Without looking at your own card, you must spend the next 5 minutes treating people according to the card that they chose.”

### *Facilitator Notes:*

At the end of the exercise, after people have been bowed to or cruelly treated, according to their card value, ask the following:

- All high cards stand (jacks to aces) “What was your experience like?”
- All middle cards stand (fives to tens) “What was your experience like?”
- All low cards stand (jokers to four) “What was your experience like?”
- How is THIS like your work situation? (office / classroom / etc.)

# Main-Course Exercises

## GROUP PULL-UP

GOAL: To work together, learn from others, and celebrate success

MATERIALS: None

INSTRUCTIONS: Begin by having the team pair up (use any partnering method you like) and then instruct the pairs by saying: “Now that you have your partner, I want you to sit on the floor facing each other. Now pay very close attention to these directions...

Maintaining contact and working foot to foot - And hand to hand – you will stand up - TOGETHER...” then repeat it – “maintaining contact foot to foot, and hand to hand, you will stand up together”)

As facilitator, just wait and watch them figure it out...

You can ask the successful pairs to “coach” the pairs who struggle... Then, for the second round, after the laughter subsides, say: “Now, you and your partner will partner with another pair to form groups of four.

Again, you must begin by sitting on the floor facing each other....

Ready? Okay – now, foot to foot and hand to hand, stand together!”

For a third round, have them form groups of eight!

Observe how well (or not!) the group communicates and shares ideas. Debrief about the need to listen to and support one another...

# Main-Course Exercises

## HELIUM HOOP

GOAL: Improved communication, working together, problem solving

MATERIALS: One hula hoop for every 5-7 participants

INSTRUCTIONS: Begin by explaining that the object of this activity is to lower the helium hula hoop to the ground while supporting it with just their index fingers.

Arrange the participants in a circle with their arms straight in front of them and their fingers pointing toward the people in front of them. Participants index fingers must remain touching the hoop at all times or the group will have to start over. Likewise, participants may not grab or pinch the hoop at any time or the group will have to start over.

As the participants are arranging themselves in a circle, be sure they leave enough room in the center for the hoop to rest on their fingers. If the circle is too small, ask everybody to take a step backward. Next, lay the hoop on the participants' fingers so that they now support the weight of the hoop. They may now begin attempting to lower the hoop to the ground.

The collective upward pressure from everyone's fingers will often be greater than the weight of the hoop, causing the hoop to float upward. If the group appears to be succeeding quickly at lowering the hoop, be particularly vigilant in making sure that everybody is touching the hoop at all times. Conversely, if the group becomes frustrated, allow them to stop for a moment to discuss a strategy before resuming the activity

# Main-Course Exercises

## DISAPPEARING CHAIRS

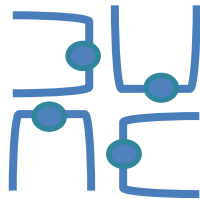
GOAL: To emphasize the need to trust and support others

MATERIALS: 4 armless chairs

INSTRUCTIONS: The chair set-up is the key to this exercise. You will have one group of four do this with all other participants watching, and then can allow others to experience the activity in different turns.

Place the four chairs next to each other, facing four different directions

\*See diagram here:



Ask participants to sit sideways in chair, facing out in different directions...

Next, remove one chair from each group. Then remove a second chair.

Then remove a third chair...

Then remove the last chair, so the participants are supporting each other.

You will need to have some attendees act as observers and assistants – they will help to remove chairs from each group during the activity.

# Main-Course Exercises

## **SCAVENGER HUNT**

GOAL: building rapport, fun and laughter, and inspiring creativity

MATERIALS: scavenger hunt instruction paper (on next page)

INSTRUCTIONS: Begin by arranging your group into teams of 4-5 people.

Prior to your meeting, make enough copies of the next page from this handbook for each team to have a copy (or create your own!).

Tell the teams that they will be competing against each other in a photo scavenger hunt activity. That they will have \_\_\_\_\_ minutes to get back to your location with as many of the photos described on their scavenger hunt list as possible. (I suggest giving them 20-30 minutes)

Explain that each photo is worth a certain number of points, and the team that earns the most points will be considered the winner...

\*When they return, check each team's phone / camera and tabulate total scores to determine your winning team – and discuss what teamwork skills were required to successfully complete the activity...

**WITHOUT LEAVING OUR BUILDING CAMPUS, YOU WILL COLLECT PHOTOS OF THE FOLLOWING TO EARN THE ASSIGNED POINTS FOR EACH ITEM.**

<u>Photo Item List:</u>	<u>Point Value:</u>
1. All team members standing next to a vending machine	20
2. Two teammates doing a handstand in a hallway	8
3. A photo of two teammates with someone dressed in a coat and tie	14
4. A picture of two teammates holding a framed college degree	18
5. A photo with at least 3 team members inside a yellow car	14
6. A team member wearing part of an official fast food restaurant uniform	22
7. A human pyramid of at least seven people	10
8. An unwrapped drinking straw balancing on someone's thumb	11
9. A team member riding a bicycle while blindfolded	18
10. A black and white photocopy of a teammates face (from copy room)	9
11. A picture that includes at least 10 people over 40 years old	27
12. A sock autographed by people from three different departments	18
13. An unwrapped piece of holiday candy	8
14. An American \$2.00 bill	10
15. A team member's first name printed in a newspaper	11
16. Jumper cables connecting two team members	16
17. A tennis ball with your youngest teammate's age written on it	17
18. A team member holding the most staplers above his or her waist	21
19. A teammate wearing another team's practice jersey in the main office	13
20. Three teammates playing a song on musical instruments	9
21. Four teammates hanging by both hands from goal posts	26
22. A hamburger wrapper	5
23. A team member brushing his teeth	7
24. Any CD of a musical artist / group recorded before 1980	8
25. Anything that says "Made in China" on it	14
26. A four leaf clover	40
27. The owner's manual for a cell phone or fax machine	11
28. A teammate wearing a college T-shirt	20
29. Six people sitting on steps arranged from oldest to youngest	15
30. Three teammates standing on the same desk	18
31. A ticket stub from a concert or show	6
32. A picture of a teammate holding a souvenir from a volunteer event	14
33. A business card for someone whose name begins with the letter P	12

**Each team must have at least one functioning phone camera, and will only receive points for saved pictures that document the item exactly as it is described above...**

**Collect the pictures and RETURN BY \_\_\_\_\_!**



# Main-Course Exercises

## COMPASS WALK

GOAL: To demonstrate the need for coaching and accepting help

MATERIALS: None

INSTRUCTIONS: Have participants pair up and then ask one of them to put on a blindfold (if you have no blindfolds, you could use bandannas)

Have each pair stand on one side of a large room, and then identify an object on the other side of the room that the blindfolded person should seek to arrive at as a destination (a tree, a door, a window that should be at least 30-50 feet away, and works best if the destination is 70-100 feet away).

Instruct the sighted partner to walk quietly behind the blindfolded partner, and to speak up and give direction when the blindfolded walker approaches an obstacle that might be in danger of hitting.

Once completed, have the partners switch roles and repeat the exercise.

If there are obstacles in the way, that is fine, and adds value to the learning opportunity the activity provides.

This opens the door for a fun debrief about how our sense of direction isn't always enough - to get where we want to go, we need help!



# Main-Course Exercises

## WELDED ANKLES

GOAL: Emphasize the need to work together and adjust to others

MATERIALS: none

INSTRUCTIONS: Begin by moving chairs and any other obstacles out of our way against a wall, or move your group to a large open space.

Arrange the group into teams of four people each. Then say:

“In your teams of four, I want you to arrange yourselves so that you are standing “shoulder to shoulder, ankle to ankle, backs to the wall”

“on your honor, if your ankles come apart, you must take two steps back”

“Your goal is to go from the wall you are on to the opposite side of the room with your team’s ankles welded together... you must maintain continuous contact for entire trip...”

Note if / how they plan before starting, what creative ways they choose to move together, if they hold each other accountable for broken ankles, and whether they cheer for and encourage others after finishing...

(You may elect to use duct tape on the floor to mark end lines for the space across which the group must travel. Have the group assemble behind the start line and explain that the group must travel over the end line while maintaining continuous contact with their feet)

# Main-Course Exercises

## SPAGHETTI ARCHITECTS

GOAL: To show the importance of roles and communication

MATERIALS: spaghetti, marshmallows, and role cards for each team

INSTRUCTIONS: You will need to arrange your group into teams of four people. Each group should be seated at a table for more comfort. Begin by giving each person a "role" written on an index card or post it, and tell participants NOT to show their card to the other players. Once everyone has been given a "role", place a pack of uncooked spaghetti and a pack of marshmallows in the center of each table.

Explain the rules to the group as a whole:

- 1) Everyone should remember to stay in their "role" during activity
- 2) No one at any time should tell what their "role" is
- 3) The object of the game is for each group to build the tallest tower
- 4) They will have exactly ten minutes to build together

Make sure to give each person in each group a different role:

- You are a hard worker, but quiet
- You are a big talker, but do very little
- You are a silent saboteur
- You only do what others ask you to do

After ten minutes- discuss how difficult it was to build a tower when not everyone was working together. Let each group tell their team what their roles were and how it made them feel. Talk about the importance of teamwork and then allow the groups to build their tower again with everyone working as a team.

Give a prize for the tallest second attempt.

# Main-Course Exercises

## **TEAMMATE TRIVIA INTERVIEW**

GOAL: deeper relationships and increased awareness of teammates

MATERIALS: pen and paper for each participant

INSTRUCTIONS: Divide your people into pairs.

Ask them to take five minutes to interview each other, and write down their partner's responses to the questions on the next page.

(make copies of next page, or type up a few of your own questions!)

Bring everyone back to together to present the 3 most interesting facts about their partner to the rest of the group.

## Teammate Trivia Interview Questions

NAME OF PERSON BEING INTERVIEWED: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Hometown / where born?
2. My proudest “family” moment was...
3. The most interesting place I’ve traveled to / visited?  
because...
4. My favorite childhood toy / game was:  
because...
5. The cartoon character I am most like is \_\_\_\_\_  
because...
6. What career would you have chosen if not this one? Why?
7. The greatest obstacle I’ve overcome was \_\_\_\_\_  
because...
8. What is the most *outrageous* thing you have in common with your partner?



# Main-Course Exercises

## PAPER SNOWFLAKES

GOAL: To illustrate the problem of poor communication and assumptions

MATERIALS: One sheet of copier paper for each person

INSTRUCTIONS: Give each member of the group a sheet of paper.

Explain that they are to follow instructions precisely, and are not allowed to ask questions. They also must follow the instructions with their eyes closed.

Share the following instructions:

1. Fold your paper in half.
2. Rip off a corner.
3. Fold it in half again.
4. Rip off a corner.
5. Fold it again.
6. Rip off a corner.

Have them open their eyes and compare their “design” with others. You can adapt this to a mixing activity by having everyone mingle looking for designs that are very close to their own.

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**NOTES:**

