

Team Building

Example Icebreakers

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Telephone Charades

This activity illustrates how breakdowns in communications can negatively affect a team. Ask for five volunteers and send four of them out of the room. The remaining group chooses a simple charade for the remaining volunteer to act out. Invite a second volunteer back into the room. The first volunteer will act out the charade for the second volunteer, without any verbal explanations. Next, invite the third volunteer back into the room, and the second volunteer will act out the charade for the third. Continue this process until the fifth volunteer has witnessed the charade; the fifth person needs to guess the message of the charade. Follow this activity with a discussion: When did the communication break down? How could communication have been improved? What are strategies teams can adopt to communicate effectively?

Count to 10

This activity will help everyone learn how to work together in the midst of chaos. The object of the exercise is for the entire group to count to 10, in order, starting at 1. The only rules are: 1) any one person cannot say more than one number in a row, 2) the group cannot go in any order and cannot be directed by anyone, and 3) if two or more people say a number at the same time, the group has to start over at 1.

Human Scrabble

Each team member is given a letter to post on his or her chest. The group must then form as many words as possible by lining themselves up in different configurations. The leader keeps track of all of the words on the board or flip chart. At the end, each person must make a sentence using one of the words from the activity.

11.5 Things about Me

Number a piece of paper from 1-11 and add an additional 11.5 at the end. Team members should write down eleven facts about themselves. When they get to 11.5, they should write down something they wish to be or do in the future. Afterwards, participants tape the list to their backs. The entire group stands, mingles, and takes turns reading each other's lists. This icebreaker can be a great conversation starter as people read about each other, or the reading can also be done silently to make the sharing less intimidating for participants.

Labels

This activity explores the different roles individuals assume within groups. Before starting, the leader uses index cards to create signs for each participant. Cards should read either 1) Leader, 2) Disagree with me, 3) Agree with me, or 4) Ignore me. To start the activity, form groups of four people, and give each group a project to complete. For example, the group needs to create a commercial for their Venture. Each group member is then given an index card to tape to their forehead; individuals cannot read their own cards. Allow teams to work for ten minutes on their projects. When they have finished, each team presents its finished project. After the presentations, ask the group to discuss what challenges they faced—how did they react to the labels? Did they follow instructions or continue as usual? Did they internalize their role in the group and get used to being the leader or being ignored?

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