

## SPAGHETTI AND MARSHMALLOW TOWERS

<http://www.businessballs.com/teambuildinggames.htm>

For a variation on the newspaper construction theme..... Issue spaghetti (raw uncooked) and marshmallows to groups of 4-5, and give them 15-30 minutes to build the highest structure in the room (or a widest bridge or tallest arch, etc - whatever the facilitator decides). A really different fun exercise for team-building, motivation and illustrating many management and organizational principles. Exercise duration, amount of materials allocated, group sizes, and whether to appoint team leaders are all flexible aspects of this wonderful game. Excellent for jaded business-people, young people and schools. The review afterwards can focus on a wide range of issues - team-building, motivation, time-management, organization, systems, planning, communication, resources, research and development, etc. If you use this exercise to illustrate a particular aspect - eg communication - it is helpful for the delegates to discuss and highlight some of the essential points in the pre-exercise brief, which provides a useful framework for the review. These unusual materials can also be used instead of construction kits for the organizational modelling exercise below. (Thanks Kathi Bogue)

### Towering Trouble

<http://home.clara.net/damanning/index.html?exercises/teambuilding.htm>

#### **Purpose of exercise -**

This one is a sneaky one, as it shows how well you can get on with people when under stress. But, it also lets you learn how much trust you can put on people.

If run leaderless, this is one exercise that will greatly highlight any interpersonal and organisational problems in a team.

#### **Preparation -**

Split into teams of between 4 to 6.

Provide each team with:

- a tub of marshmallows (sweets variety)
- a pack of cheap spaghetti.
- 1 RAW egg.

#### **Exercise -**

They have 1 Hr to build an unsupported structure on the floor using ONLY the materials provided. This must support an egg as high off of the floor as possible!

#### **For Staff -**

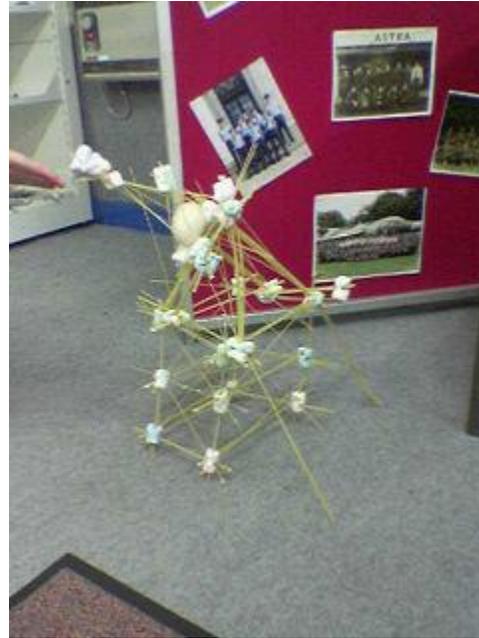
Don't marshall this one too strictly!

Seriously, the lessons learnt during this exercise are much more varied if the team is just left to "get on with it".

This exercise can also be a great leveller of characters, especially for the 'joker' of any group, as their acceptance into the group can swing between extremes. ie. if they start eating the marshmallows then they normally get quickly put in their place by the rest of the group!

#### **When finished -**

Measure the distance from the floor to the bottom edge of the egg.  
Highest distance wins!



## SAVE THE EGG

<http://www.youthwork.com/activities/init.html>

**Equipment:** An egg, two balloons, a roll of selotape (Scotch Tape), some elastic bands, two straws and 4 pieces of paper

**Description:** The group has 20 mins to make a vehicle to carry the egg. The vehicle should be strong enough to withstand a fifteen foot drop onto concrete. Can you save the egg from cracking?

## BLIND POLYGON

[http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity\\_blind\\_polygon.htm](http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_blind_polygon.htm)

**What:** A challenging problem-solving initiative that casts light on the team's listening skills, roles, meeting dynamics and problem-solving processes.

**Group Size:** 10-30

**Time:** One hour

**Props:** One blindfold per participant; one 50 - 100 foot length of rope; video camera (optional)

**Objective:** For the blindfolded group to form a perfect square (or triangle, or hexagon if you're somewhat sadistic ...) with the rope.

**Instructions:**

Blindfold the group, lay a rope on the ground somewhere in their midst, then cryptically tell them that there is something in their midst that they will need to find, that they will know it when they find it, and that you will give the group further instructions when each person is holding the prop. Instruct them to move slowly and with their hands out in front of them to prevent bumps. After the group finds the rope, tell them to make it into as perfect a square as they can, and that they will have up to twenty minutes to do so. Videotape the whole affair. When the group decides that it has made a square, they can remove their blindfolds and check their work. Total time to this point is 30 minutes.

Pop the tape into a VCR and play it back for the group, pausing it at points and inviting participants to observe and point out significant aspects of their group process. Debrief time is 30 minutes for a total of one hour.

### **Facilitator Notes:**

1. This activity is challenging - expect some resistance or "checking-out."
2. POSSIBLE USES:
  - **ASSESSMENT / OWNERSHIP OF ISSUES:** When used at the beginning of a training day, have the group identify the strengths that they observe and the opportunities for growth. Depending upon the group's performance, can also be used at the conclusion of training to note improvement.
  - **SKILLS PRACTICE:** Can also be used following classroom training as skills practice on identified areas for improvement. In this activity, the group must 1) hold a meeting, 2) problem-solve, and 3) make a decision, so it is most appropriate as part of any of these trainings.

## **SILENT GEOMETRY EQUIPMENT: 50 FT. ROPE CIRCLE**

Instructions: Have everyone in the group hold on to the rope. The group should be evenly spaced out along the length of the rope. The objective of Silent Geometry is for the group to form a shape with the rope without using any verbal communication. The instructor will call out the name of each shape.

Options:

· This activity can be changed to focus on specific areas of teamwork. For example, allow one student to act as a leader and talk to direct the rest of the group. Or, allow the entire group to talk to illustrate the need for leadership and planning.

Instructor Tips:

· Make the shapes more and more complex each time. Possible options include; circle, rectangle, square, parallelogram, pentagon, etc.

## **BUILDING BRIDGES**

[http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity\\_bridges.htm](http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_bridges.htm)

**Learning Objective:** To introduce the idea of teamwork, communication and creative problem solving.

**Group Size:** Small groups of 5-7 people.

**Space Required:** a room with ample space for movement.

**Time Required:** 1 hour

**Props Required:** Lots of newspaper, rolls (6-8) of masking tape, a gallon jug 1/4 to 1/2 full of water, a plastic dishpan type container, cassette player, cassette tape with "William Tell Overture" or music with a hectic pace.

**Activity Instructions:** "You are going to build a bridge using only the newspaper and masking tape. The bridge must be strong enough to hold this bottle (show the bottle and let them check the feel of it for weight). Also, the bridge must be tall enough for the pan to pass underneath it. The bridge must be free-standing; not attached to the wall, a piece of furniture, a person or an article of clothing...FREE-STANDING."

Tell the group they are to line up according to birth month and day and CANNOT talk while doing this.

Next, starting with January each person reveals the month and date of birth. If any person is out of sequence, the groups is to say loudly "unh-hah".

Count off so that they are divided into teams.

**Rules Summary:** (Clarify understanding of rules. I also write them on flip chart.)

1. Cannot use materials other than newspaper and masking tape.
2. Each group to build a bridge that the dish can pass under and hold the gallon jug for 10 seconds.
3. Cannot stick/tape to another person or furniture.
4. 7 minutes to plan; 8 minutes to build the bridge.

**Process:**

Tell them they will have 7 minutes to plan, discuss, etc., and to be sure everyone in the group is included. DO THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? Time the 7 minutes. After the 7 minute discussion period, pass out the newspaper and tape. Inform the group they will now have 8 minutes to construct their bridge and, by the way, there will be no talking allowed during this 8 minutes.

At the end of 8 minutes, allow the groups 30 seconds to speak to each other and then an additional 3 minutes of SILENTLY work to complete their bridge. During this last work session, play the "William Tell Overture" (or other such music) loudly.

Call time and have one group at a time present their bridge. A spokesperson from each group will tell about their bridge and pass the pan under and put the jug on top. When the jug is put on top, all will count for 10 seconds. (This will be done for each group).

**Processing/discussion questions:**

- How did you work as a group?
- Which part was the most difficult?
- Did everyone participate in some way?
- Did you feel like you contributed to the group?
- Did you feel like you were part of the group?
- Was there one particular person that kept the ball rolling?
- Were there individuals who were particularly quiet?
- How was their quietness interpreted: agreement or disagreement?
- What influenced the type of bridge built by each group?
- Why were no two alike?

- How did communication or lack of it affect the work of the group?
- What characteristics of teamwork became evident during this exercise?

## TALISMAN

[http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity\\_talisman.htm](http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_talisman.htm)

**What:** A difficult, physical problem-solving/teambuilding activity for high performing teams.

**Group Size:** From 8 - 20.

**Space Required:** a large, relatively flat open space at least 50 feet in length. Large conference rooms work well -- football fields are even better!

**Time Required:** 1 hour

**Props Required:** Cones or other markers to designate the start and finish lines; some easily-recognized prop to be the talisman -- a rubber chicken is the best!

**Objective:** For the group to move across the poison peanut butter from point A to point B given the following restrictions:

1. You must have the Talisman physically with you as you cross;
2. Each person may only use the Talisman one time going one way; and
3. The Talisman cannot be thrown or tossed.

### Facilitator Notes:

1. This activity is mentally and emotionally challenging - expect frustration, "start-overs," and other signs of stress. Be very deliberate about your goals and your group - while chaos is not necessarily a bad thing (see Peck's *The Different Drum*), you wouldn't want to throw folks there on a whim.
2. This activity is physically challenging - a correct solution will have at least one person "carrying" two other people across the peanut butter. Make sure you check in with folks beforehand about any low back, knee, etc. issues and monitor appropriately.

### BALLOON ACTIVITY

Balloons on the Wall

### DESCRIPTION

Balloons are very excitable. By rubbing them for several seconds on your hair, clothes, etc. you can generate substantial static electricity. The balloon can then stick on walls or ceilings for several minutes. A game can go like this: Put a large pile of balloons in the centre of the room. Each player or team is allocated an area of wall. Players then grab balloons, rubs on him/herself, then attempts to stick to wall. If balloon sticks, players add another. After approx. 5 minutes the winner is the team/player with the most suspended balloons.

Balloon Challenge

Challenge pairs to insert one balloon inside another and inflate both. Good problem-solving and teamwork exercise.

# TWINKLE TOWER

## Objective

For people to work together to solve a problem in a way that gives the team the maximum reward at the end.

## Group Size

2 or more

## Materials

-  1 box of wrapped Twinkies® per team
-  1 box of mixed plastic silverware per team
-  1 3x5 index card per team

## Description

This activity can be done with one or more teams depending on the group size. Teams should have two to eight players each. Give each team one box of individually wrapped Twinkies® (they usually come in a box of ten), one small box or bag of plastic silverware, and one 3x5 index card.

Then give the following challenge: Use the Twinkies® and the silverware to create a structure that is at least 3" tall. The 3x5 card is to be used only as a measuring device. Any Twinkies not used in the structure itself can be placed on the structure. At the end of a given time limit, any Twinkies® supported by the structure and still in their wrapper may be eaten. Any Twinkies® that are not supported on the structure or that were used in the building of the structure may not be eaten.

## Discussion Prompts

1. Were you happy with your reward at the end?
2. How did you decide the number of Twinkies® used in the structure?
3. Did everyone on your team agree with all of the decisions being made?
4. Did everyone on your team strive to save as many Twinkies® as possible?
5. How do you feel your team did during this challenge? What is your proof?

## Variation

-  This can be done with other wrapped food items that people would like to eat at the end of the game.

# THE GREAT MISSISSIPPI LIZARD EGG

[http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity\\_mississippi.htm](http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_mississippi.htm)

**What:** An initiative problem developed by Sam Sikes of Learning Unlimited Corporation and included in his book Feeding the Zircon Gorilla And Other Team Building Activities under the title "The Giant Texas Lizard Egg." Sam knew of or had developed an activity using every other type of ball imaginable and was wondering what he could do with his old bowling ball. The following is the result of his musings ...

**Group Size:** 6-18

**Props Required:** 1 bowling ball, one 3 to 5 foot rope per participant, a milk crate or bowling ball carrying bag

**Objective:** To move the bowling ball across a space and into the crate (bag).

**Activity Instructions:** Sam's imaginative scenario is priceless, so I quote:

"You have found yourselves in the middle of a crisis. An egg from a giant Texas [insert 'Mississippi' here - no geographical bias on our part!] lizard has rolled from its nest and needs to be replaced before the mother returns. Unfortunately, the shell of the lizard egg has properties of the adult lizard's tail: it emits a sweet odor but is highly toxic. Fortunately for you, a game warden has left some specially treated ropes nearby for just such an incident. The ropes have been treated with radiation to eliminate the possibility of a premature hatching. The radiation is at tolerable levels; however, over-exposure causes instant and terrible side-effects such as blindness, muteness or confusion. I once saw several team members develop a 'death grip' on each of their ropes when they were over-exposed. Over-exposure occurs when a person touches his own rope with more than one hand. Somehow you must discover a way to move the egg, without breaking it, back into its nest before the mother returns. Be sure not to contact the egg with anything but the treated ropes. Don't over-expose yourselves ... and don't even try moving that nest. Giant Texas [Mississippi] lizards are especially sensitive to movement of their nests. I understand the mother lizards grow to 300 pounds and can strike faster than a snake when they are protecting their young. Good luck!"

**Facilitator Notes:**

1. As facilitator, you will have several choices to make based upon your group's level of skill/development and your learning objectives, to wit:
  - Distance from the "egg" to the "nest": further is obviously more (sometimes exponentially more) difficult.
  - When is a dropped egg a "cracked egg" or failure? From what height? Most groups will drop the egg once or twice as they develop their system, but it may only be from an inch or so from the ground. I'm not suggesting you have a particular height in mind, just that you will need to be nearby and ready to respond to the looks of "now what" when it happens.
  - How closely will you monitor "over-exposure?" Will you ask the group to monitor themselves and inform you, or will you watch like a hawk?
  - What is the penalty for "over-exposure?" I usually give the scenario as listed above almost verbatim because it leaves me, the facilitator, with the option to adjust the penalty to meet the group's needs, e.g., if the "offender" is the most outspoken person in the group (often happens), an appropriate consequence might be muteness or a sudden attack of the "Little Caesar's Disease" (he has to repeat every word he says - get get the the point point?)

## KEYPUNCH

[http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity\\_keypunch.htm](http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_keypunch.htm)

**What:** a problem-solving initiative, much more challenging to accomplish than it seems from the instructions.

**Group Size:** 10-30

**Time:** 45 minutes.

**Props Required:** one boundary rope approximately 50' long, 30 rubber spots (or carpet squares or paper plates) numbered from 1-30, one cone.

**Setup:** Before the group assembles, form a rectangle on the group with the boundary rope. Spread out the numbered spots within the boundary rope so that consecutive numbers are spread far apart from one another. To the casual observer, these should seem to be placed in a seemingly random fashion. This will form your keypad. Place the cone as a starting/ending point approximately 10 yards away from the keypad.

### Activity Instructions:

1. With your group assembled and standing behind the starting point, explain that a terrible computer virus has infected the main computers at the IRS and that this group of computer experts has been hired to disinfect the system (someone will ask "For the IRS ... why?" Be creative).
2. In order to disinfect the system, the team must enter the "restricted area" (anywhere beyond the starting cone, press the keys (spots) on the keyboard (anywhere within the rope boundary) in sequential order from one to 30, and get out of the "restricted area" in less than 30 seconds, with the following two stipulations:
  - there may only be one person actually contacting the keyboard (i.e., the spots and/or the spaces between the spots, anywhere within the rope boundary) at any one time. Should two or more individuals be contacting the keyboard at one time, the board is "fried" and the group must begin again at number one. Time, of course, continues.
  - Keys must be touched in order. If any keys are touched out of order, the board is "fried" and the group must begin again at number one. Time, of course, continues.
3. The group has a total of four attempts to disinfect the computer, time for each attempt beginning when the first person in the group moves past the starting cone on their way to the keypad and ending when the last person arrives back at the cone.
4. At the end of 45 minutes, the computer will crash irrevocably with the terrible consequence that all of the money from everyone's pay check will automatically be withdrawn (or something like that). You get the picture - the group has a 45 minute time limit from NOW.

### Facilitator Notes:

1. The first attempt will be much longer than thirty seconds as the group has not even seen the keyboard up to this point. Successful groups often use either the first or second attempt to truly study the situation and attempt multiple solutions while letting the clock run.
2. Key team skills: making sure all ideas are heard; involving all members in the process and solution; solving a problem under pressure.

## NEWSPAPER BRIDGE

Again, lots of variations to this. Great for reinforcing communications, support, interdepartmental co-operation themes. In teams (threes are best; teams of four or five can create 'passengers' unless you brief clearly for everyone to be involved and/or have each team appoint a team leader) using only the newspaper and Sellotape (alternatively known as scotch tape) issued, each team must construct a bridge, including floor-standing supports at each end and a horizontal span. The winning construction will be the one with the longest span between two floor-standing supports. If any additional floor-standing support is created, qualifying span measurement will be the longest length between any two of the floor-standing supports. There must be at least (say) 20cms clearance between the span and the floor. Any of the span lower than 20cms clearance will not count towards the measurement. The span must support certain objects issued (eg apple, chocolate bar, can of drink - consumable items are more fun) which must be placed (not fixed with Sellotape) on the span. The objects can be positioned anywhere along the length of the span, but must not touch the floor-standing supports. The floor-standing supports must be free-standing, ie not attached to the floor or any other object or surface. The use of Sellotape as 'guys' from the bridge to the floor or another object or surface is not allowed. Time allowed for planning and building and placing objects on the span is say 20 (max 45) minutes.

Variations to tower and bridge games:

Tower must support an object (eg a lemon, book, brick, plastic beaker of water, etc). Measurement is taken to height of supported object. If you issue an object to be supported at the top of a tower consider the well-being of the flooring and furniture. Beware safety and mess implications of certain objects, so avoid cups of coffee, glasses, etc.

Build a newspaper and tape bridge between two tables, to support the greatest weight (number of given objects).

Build the highest platform to support a person's weight, using only newspaper and tape - make sure there's plenty of newspaper for this version, ie, three big newspapers for each team. (Bear in mind that a platform is still a platform if it's only an inch high, although platforms of a few inches are perfectly feasible.)

Build the longest horizontal pier from a table top, supported with newspaper struts or not.

### **tips on newspaper constructions exercises**

You can allocate as many sheets as you wish, although it really depends chiefly on the main purpose of the exercise, and then to an extent the duration and how many team members per team. As a general rule - the fewer the sheets the smaller the teams and the shorter the exercise. Lots of sheets and big teams require longer. Short timescales, big teams, lots of sheets = lots of chaos - which is ideal for demonstrating the need for leadership and management. Unless the purpose is leadership and managing the planning stage, avoid small numbers of sheets with large teams. Small teams don't need lots of sheets unless you make a rule to use all materials in order to put pressure on the planning and design stage. Examples of main purposes and numbers of sheets:

- Very strong emphasis on preparation and design - 1-5 sheets - in pairs or threes.
- Design, planning, preparation, team-working - 5-10 sheets - in threes or fours.
- Team building, time-management, warm up, ice-breaker, with some chaos-management - 20 sheets - in fours, fives or sixes.
- Managing a lot of chaos - 30 sheets and upwards - teams of six or more.

News paper construction exercises are terrifically flexible and useful. When you decide the activity purpose and rules, the important thing is to issue the same quantity of materials to each team.

### **other tips for newspaper construction activities**

- Building tips: It doesn't matter how big the sheets are, but big double pages offer the greatest scope for the towers.
- Think about how much paper is issued as it changes the type of challenge: lots of paper makes it much easier and places less emphasis on planning. Very few sheets, or even just one sheet, increases the requirement for planning.
- The main trick for the bridge and tower exercises (don't tell the delegates before the exercise) is to make long thin round-section struts, by rolling the sheets and fixing with sticky tape - Sellotape or scotch tape, or narrow masking tape instead. The struts can then be connected using various techniques, rather like girders. The same construction approach works well for the bridge too.
- Round struts (tubes), and any other design of struts or sections, lose virtually all their strength if flattened or bent.
- Very few newspaper exercise builders understand this fundamental point, and some fail to realise it even after completing the exercise, so it's worth pointing out during the review.
- Square sections are not very strong. Triangular or circular sections work best, although the former are difficult to make.
- It's possible to make a very tall tower (8-10 feet) using a telescopic design, which requires many sheets to be stuck together end-to-end, rolling together and then pulling out from the centre.
- Most people make the mistake of forming big square section lengths or spans, which are inherently very weak and unstable. This is why the newspaper constructions are such good exercises - each one needs thinking about and planning and testing or people fall into traps and make simple mistakes.
- The strongest design for weight-bearing is 'building blocks' of hexagonal tubes (six sides). This is the shape that naturally results if lots of circular tubes are compressed sideways together, and it's also the shape found in nature's beehive construction. Hexagonal tubes are difficult to make though and it's unlikely that people will think to do it. It's useful to make up a few samples to demonstrate in the review how strong the hexagonal construction is.
- Less strong, but quicker is to make lots of short rolled circular tubes, up to six inches high - make sure there's enough paper for the teams when using the human weight-bearing platform exercise.
- Grouping the tubes together, stood on their ends and placing sufficient sheets on top to spread the person's weight usually is the easiest way to complete this exercise to a winning standard.
- Alternatively, roll up lots of solid cylinders, again a few inches long. Grouped and fixed together on their ends these make an immensely strong platform.
- The best way of finding answers is to try it - you should be doing that anyway if you are facilitating and running the session - you'll be amazed at how strong paper can be if it's folded and/or rolled and assembled with a bit of thought.
- The weight bearing platform will only be a few inches high - we're not expecting to get someone up to the ceiling.
- If all else fails, if you think about it, at it's simplest a team member could simply stand on all of their allotted sheets of paper. It'll only be a few millimetres high, but it's still a platform.
- All of these exercises are generally tackled best by making the 'building block' elements, whether struts or tubes or any other shapes. And this emphasises one of the big lessons from the exercises - planning, and testing (time and materials permitting) are essential.

## **TYRE GAME**

<http://www.businessballs.com/teambuildinggames.htm>

A wonderful team building game for teams of ideally 10 to 15 persons, although a minimum of six people per team will work, and actually there is no upper limit per team - it depends on space, and how much emphasis is placed on the planning stage. Total group size is therefore as many 10-15 person teams that the space will accommodate, which also makes this team building exercise terrific for conferences and warm-ups of very large groups. You'll need two bicycle tyres, with different tread patterns, for each team. Organize each team into a circle, with the team members' hands tightly clasped. The tyres are introduced by the facilitator at opposite points of the circle by unclasping hands of two members and hanging the tyres on the arms, which should then be joined again by clasping their hands. The object of the game is for the team to pass each tyre in a different direction around the circle, involving two crossings of the tyres, and then finishing with each tyre at its starting position. The team which finishes first wins the game. Hands must not be unclasped, and thumbs cannot be used to support or move the tyres. Allow ten minutes planning and thinking time, (or for very large teams where a warm-up only is required, give instructions so that the game can start immediately). Obviously the game must start at the same time for each team. The trick is for the tyre to be moved up the arm, over the head, down the body, at which point the person steps out of the tyre, one leg after the other, and the tyre continues down the other arm to the next team member. The stepping manoeuvre when two tyres cross is the most difficult and requires some agility, so the planning and team selection is potentially very important. **NB As a facilitator you must practice this game before using in a team building or conference situation, to prepare for questions and to demonstrate, if required.**

Here are the typical review points for the tyre game team building exercise, usually based on the performance of the winning team:

- The team understands the task and aim of the team building game.
- The circle of people develops into a team with a common objective.
- Technique to achieve task is discovered and refined by 'storming' (see the **Tuckman team development model**).
- A team leader emerges.
- Practice (essential) develops technique and plan.
- The leader's role becomes stronger as the team develops.
- Difficulties are ironed out.
- Resources (people) are reorganized.
- Right person for the right job (notably for the two crossing points)
- Training and practice are carried out.
- The team becomes increasingly motivated to perform.
- Performance improves, excels, achieves and wins.

## **NEWSPAPER BRIDGE THE GAP TEAM EXERCISE**

<http://www.businessballs.com/teambuildinggames.htm>

Newspaper construction exercises are always reliable, flexible and inexpensive activities for team building (and planning, leadership, team-working, etc) - see the main **newspaper construction exercises and tips below**, and they are very transferable when you want games activities ideas to cascade or spread usage through organizations or departments. If your aim is to build teams and relationships, especially inter-departmental, mix up the groups, so team members don't already know each other. For an extra twist to the usual towers or bridges exercises below, and ideal for large groups, work with teams of 6. Split each team in half. The team task is for each half-team of three (or can be pairs) to build their half of a newspaper bridge so that it connects and can be joined to the other half of their team's construction, to meet in the middle between two tables. Preferably (this is at the facilitators discretion) sticky tape must not be used to fix each end of the bridge to the table - ie., bridges must be self-supporting. The winning team can be quickest or strongest supporting structure - it's up to the facilitator - you can add the requirement for the bridge to support an object - a lemon or a

chocolate bar for example. (The secret is to build **up** and out so that each side of the bridge supports the other - two horizontal halves generally collapse unless each is extremely strong. Tightly rolled struts make stronger constructions. Establish game rules that prevent both halves of the teams simply making a single bridge fixed to each table with sticky tape, which would defeat the challenge of the exercise. Control the level of difficulty of the game by the distance between the tables and the number of sheets issued.) And in similar vein the next activity:

## NEWSPAPER DOMES BIG GROUP EXERCISE

<http://www.businessballs.com/teambuildinggames.htm>

For one great big group team building exercise, split the whole group into pairs or threes, the task being to build a dome or roof structure/frame and cover it with newspaper and sticky tape, between as many tables as there are pairs/threes. This is not a contest between the teams, it's a task for the whole group to cooperate and work together. For example, for a whole group size of 12 people, there could be six tables and six pairs - or five tables and five teams of three - each pair/three building one strut of a six- or five-strut dome frame; for a group of 9 people, there could be three teams of three, and three tables, each team of three building a strut for a three-strut roof frame. Each pair/three should build their strut up and out from the table, connecting in the centre space with the struts from each of the other pairs/threes. Struts can be fixed to the tables and joined in the centre-space with sticky tape. For large frames (which will be required if the tables are placed further away from each other), cross-struts can be used. The whole group can then cover the dome or roof frame with sheets of newspaper. Requires a lot of thought, team-working, communication, sharing best-practice, assessment and feedback along the way, and leadership at key decision stages. Control the level of difficulty by the distance between the tables and the number of newspaper sheets issued. (As with many of the newspaper team building activities, the secret is to agree first on a strut design - typically tightly-rolled sheets - which can then be used to construct whatever overall design is planned, but let the delegates work this out for themselves.) It can be helpful for review afterwards to brainstorm with the whole group the expected key performance elements, and for these to be used as the assessment criteria (see the [Training elements/exercise review template](#) assessment proforma sheet available on the [free resources page](#)).

<b>RAFT CROSSING</b>	
<a href="http://www.geocities.com/initiativetasks/Initiative.htm">http://www.geocities.com/initiativetasks/Initiative.htm</a>	
<b>Type</b>	Very active activity that can be done outside or inside (large room).  Works on problem solving and working together.
<b>Group Size</b>	Any group size
<b>Equipment</b>	Transport Pads = Gym mats, milk crates, pieces of fire wood, chairs  Keys = balls, rubber chickens, bean bags
<b>Scenario</b>	The entire group is being held captive by aliens on an alien planet that is covered with lava or toxic waste. They have an opportunity to escape the evil aliens and make it back home.
<b>Objective</b>	To get everyone from the starting area to the launch area alive and well.

<b>Rules</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The entire group starts in the corner of a large room, auditorium or gym.</li> <li>2. They are in a safe place for the time being, but their job is to get to the opposite side where there is another safe place and a "transport beam" or "escape rocket" that will take them out of this volatile area.</li> <li>3. The rest of the room is covered with a deadly substance that will kill them immediately upon contact. (i.e. lava, acid or toxic waste)</li> <li>4. This means that if they place a hand or foot or anything on the actual floor of the room, they are dead. People who die either reappear back at the starting area or are out of the game completely. This is a decision that the facilitator needs to make before explaining the rules.</li> <li>5. They are given transport pads that they can use to stand on to cross the evil surface and make it safely to the other side.</li> <li>6. Gymnastic mats make good transport pads but almost anything that people can stand on can be used including upside down milk crates, pieces of fire wood, chairs, etc.</li> </ol>
<b>Variations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To emphasize teamwork, it is a good idea to make the overall objective to ensure that EVERYONE makes it to the launch area. This means that if someone has died and reappeared back at the starting point, they have to send someone back for them.</li> <li>2. If someone has died and does not get to reappear, the group has a whole has failed the task and everyone must start over again. You need to be prepared to deal with the group's response to failure and intervene if they become too negative.</li> <li>3. Give a time limit. At the end of that time limit, anyone who is not in the transport beam, dies.</li> <li>4. Give as few transport pads as possible. If they have to crowd onto 2 mats, so be it. The whole idea is working together anyway.</li> <li>5. Put a number of "keys" around the area that they have to collect in order to turn on the transport beam. A good "thinker" is to tell them that upon all of the keys being in the transport area, the beam automatically operates and takes those keys and people in the beam away.</li> <li>6. They have to activate the keys before they will work. A good way of activating the keys is for them to have to pass through something like a basketball hoop.</li> <li>7. Be a "bog monster" and steal transport pads away from the group if they are not on them.</li> </ol>
<b>Note</b>	<p>This is a really enjoyable initiative task that groups will often request again and again. It can easily be changed and made new by just holding it in a different location or using different materials. One thing that I enjoyed doing was to make the bog monster react to a specific stimuli for that round and it was up to them to figure out what made the bog monster become more active and interfere with their attempts.</p>
<b>ELECTRIC FENCE</b>	
<b>Type</b>	Active activity that can be done anywhere.
<b>Group Size</b>	Any group size although if the group is too large, over 20, there will be a lot of people standing around doing nothing.
<b>Equipment</b>	Rope, trees, chairs, blindfolds
<b>Scenario</b>	Your group is being chased by a band of ferocious outer space pygmies. They have set up

	this electric fence trap to catch you.
<b>Objective</b>	To get the entire group over the electric fence without anyone touching it.
<b>Rules</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You will need a rope tied between two trees or other objects at approximately belly button height of the average height of the group members. If you make the rope too high, it can become dangerous but if you make it too low, it will be too easy.</li> <li>2. Your group is on one side of the electric fence.</li> <li>3. You must get your whole group over to the other side of the electric fence using only the resources you have on you.</li> <li>4. You cannot use any other equipment.</li> <li>5. No part of your body, clothing or equipment may touch the rope.</li> <li>6. If it does, that person is returned back to the original side and must attempt the crossing again.</li> <li>7. Although you may step or stand underneath the electric fence, no person or equipment may totally penetrate it, so you cannot send anyone or anything under the electric fence.</li> <li>8. It is important to note that the trees the rope is tied to are also electrified and so touching them will also cause you to be blindfolded.</li> <li>9. The area is pressure sensitive on both sides of the electric fence. Any jumps or hard landings will also trigger the alarm so you must carefully take off from this side and carefully set people down on the other side. This means no jumping or diving.</li> </ol>
<b>Variations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone must be in contact with the entire group through at least one other person. In other words, everyone must be touching someone else and everyone must be connected at all times.</li> <li>2. Any part of the body that touches the rope becomes useless and is welded to the body with a blindfold.</li> <li>3. Any person that comes into contact with the electric fence is blindfolded and returned to the original side.</li> <li>4. If you have a large number of people, a good variation would be to build more than one fence. You could even box the entire group in with four fences and their objective becomes getting out of the box.</li> </ol>
<b>Note</b>	As with some of the other tasks, there are some safety concerns with this one that you have to watch for. One of the most common approaches people will use to solve this task is to have some people go on their hands and knees and be used as a stairway so that others with some support can climb over top. You have to make sure that the kneeling person is on their hands and knees in a 90 degree formation so that their arms and legs form a locked and sturdy support. It is also important that the person stepping does not step on the middle of this person's back that is not directly supported below by legs or arms. It is probably best to step on the kneeling person's tailbone that will be supported by the legs and is the strongest point. You will also want to make sure that the person stepping is not too much larger than the person they are stepping on. You cannot allow anyone to be carelessly just thrown over for obvious reasons. Don't be surprised if they want to try this approach with some of their smaller members.
<b>Save The Reactor</b>	

<b>Type</b>	Active activity that can be done anywhere.  Works on teamwork.
<b>Group Size</b>	Any size.
<b>Equipment</b>	A ball or number of balls.  One scoop or container per person. Cut off milk jugs work great.  A bunch of obstacles.  Container to serve as the reactor.
<b>Scenario</b>	A nuclear reactor requires fuel (the balls) and it's up to the group to safely transport the fuel as quickly as possible to the reactor. The fuel is unstable which means that any contact with anything other than the inside of the scoops will result in annihilation.
<b>Objective</b>	Move the ball(s) across an obstacle course as quickly as possible to the point of safety.
<b>Rules</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ball(s) can only come into contact with the inside of the scoops or containers.</li> <li>2. Any contact with anything else results in annihilation which means that the group has failed at the task.</li> <li>3. The ball(s) must contact each and every scoop before being placed in the reactor for it to work.</li> <li>4. There is a specific path through as many obstacles as possible that must be followed for the fuel to reach the reactor.</li> <li>5. All of the fuel must reach the reactor within a specified time or the reactor will erupt.</li> <li>6. No scoop may have more than one fuel ball in it at one time. If individual fuel balls contact each other outside of the reactor....KABOOM.</li> </ol>
<b>Variations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change the number of fuel balls and the amount of time that they have to accomplish the task.</li> <li>2. The group spreads out throughout the obstacle course and plants one pivot foot that cannot be moved from that spot from that point on.</li> </ol>
<b>Note</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☀ The real challenge in this task will lie in the obstacle course that you develop. You will want to make sure that you have enough things that they have to go over and under in order to make it difficult.</li> <li>☀ If possible, try to put a few obstacles in the mess that a person can't go through which will force them to think and hopefully realize that they can fit their arms through to pass the balls through.</li> <li>☀ Try to create an obstacle that takes advantage of the varying strengths of your group.</li> <li>☀ A wall that can't be climbed but that your two tallest people can reach over and meet.</li> </ul>

	 A long tunnel that only the smallest members of your class can fit through.
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