

How to Build a Great Team

Team-Building Activities That Rock

What is team-building?

Team Building is the process of a team coming together as a group, learning about each other, and being able to work effectively with one another. Investing in building a strong team from the beginning will pay off in the long run.

At first, team-building activities may seem like a waste of time, especially as your team nears a deadline. However, a team building exercise can help your team reenergize and focus as a group; it can help stir everyone's energy and creativity far more effectively than sitting in an unproductive meeting.

When to Use Team-Building Activities

Use team-building activities when:

- A team is just forming and learning to work together
- You want to introduce new team members
- Members seem to be bored
- There is conflict or arguing
- You want a break from routine
- You want to boost team spirit

Try Icebreakers

Icebreakers are activities that help individuals in a group get to know each other and feel more comfortable working together. Icebreakers can help team members get to know each other and help everyone feel more comfortable sharing your

ideas and opinions. Icebreakers can also be used to improve a team's problem-solving abilities and interpersonal communication skills. For examples of icebreakers, check out the Youth Venture tip sheet, "Example Icebreakers."

Make It Fun!

Icebreakers and team building exercises may seem silly, but they can still be effective. When a team is having fun, members cannot help but to get to know each other better.

Icebreaker Ideas

The Name Game

Everyone sits around in a circle. Each person says his/her name and one characteristic that describes him/her that starts with the first letter of his/her name. For example, Tim might say "Talented Tim" or "Truthful Tim." Have the next person repeat the last name-characteristic combination and then add his/her own. Keep going until the last person has to repeat all the name-characteristic combinations.

Two Truths and a Lie

Each person writes three scenarios about themselves, two of which are true, and one of which is a lie. Each person takes a turn reading his/her scenario. It's up to the rest of the group to guess which

scenario is a lie. At the end, the presenter reveals the correct answer.

Questions

Each group member receives one slip of paper and writes down a general question. For example, "What's your favorite movie?" Everyone then places his/her question in a bucket or hat. The hat or bucket then gets passed around the room and everyone has to answer the question they pick out.

Pass the Potato

Participants stand in a circle and toss a ball to one another. When someone catches the ball, that person must answer a question about him/herself. For example, recipients of the ball could be asked to say one interesting fact about themselves or describe one passion. This continues until everyone has had the ball.

Group Juggling

Participants form a circle and choose a leader. The leader starts with one ball and tosses it to someone else across the circle calling out his/her name before throwing it. That person then calls someone else's name across the circle and then throws the ball to him/her. This continues until everyone in the circle has caught the ball and the last to do so tosses it back across the circle to the leader. The leader starts this process all over again, but this time multiple balls are added until the group is working together to keep all of the balls in the air.

Bingo

Each person writes three interesting facts about themselves and submits them to the leader. The leader then constructs a bingo board with one or two facts from each person, without including any names.

The bingo board is photocopied and distributed to everyone in the group. Each person then has ten minutes to interview the rest of the group. The goal is to determine which fact belongs to which individual and to write the correct name beside the fact. The winner is the first person to have an entire row, column, or board of names.

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.

Line up

This short activity plays on team members' knowledge of each other and their ability to communicate nonverbally. Ask team members to line up youngest to oldest or based on the month in which their birthday falls. The catch is that the entire activity is completed in silence.

