



TOO MANY COOKS

Set Up

Your family (group) just inherited a successful restaurant from Chef Charlie, a long lost relative. The only problem: Charlie was amazingly disorganized. The only recipes you have found are on torn strips of paper. You have to make sense of it all and quickly! The restaurant is opening tonight, and you have to have the food ready.

1. Depending upon the size of the group, you can do this as a single group or as two (you can use the same recipe) and make it feel competitive.
2. Each member of the group will be given part of recipe (an ingredient, instruction, etc.).
3. Your job is to put yourselves in order as quickly as possible. Your recipe must make sense.
4. When your group is done, loudly announce “bon appetite” to signal the end of the game.

Materials Needed

Several Small Prizes for the Winning Team

Cut Recipes (Separate the Title, Ingredients, Instructions, Etc.)

Time

Allow ten to 12 minutes for the game. Once a team calls “bon appetite,” have them introduce themselves and read their recipe in order.

Variations

- For an added challenge, this game can be made considerably more difficult if groups are not pre-designated before the recipe pieces are distributed. Participants must then not only find the correct order but the correct recipe as well.

Connection to Business:

- Can be confusing to figure out how all pieces tie together (confusing for staff, customers, etc)
- If one key ingredient is missing, recipe does not work (if one key step is missing, process does not work well)
- How will leverage the success you just experienced as you begin to work together as a team? How will you “call out” that you may be missing a step / ingredient?

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I REMEMBER

You and the others in your group are about to revisit the past and take a trip down “Memory Lane.” (have pennies in a bag that they must reach into)

DIRECTIONS

1. First, get a coin.
2. Next, look at the year on the coin. Take a minute to think about what you were doing when that coin was minted. Were you in school? Were you a child? Where did you work? Were you married? Where did you live? What was going on in your life at that time? What was the music of the day? Etc. ***(If you were not yet born or prefer not to discuss your life during the year selected, choose another coin.)***
3. After you have had some time to remember where you were, you are ready to play the game. Your goal is to find someone with a coin that was minted at least two years before or after yours.
4. Once you have found a partner, take a total of three minutes to tell each other about your moments in time. When you are finished, each of you flip your coin. Reveal the results of your toss to your partner. If they are alike (both heads or tails) exchange coins and find new partners. If they differ, grab new coins and find new partners.
5. Repeat the process (find a new partner) up to three times as designated by the facilitator.

Materials Needed

Pennies in a bag

Time (20 minutes)

Allow five minutes for setup. Allow five minutes for each round.

At the end of the 3rd round, have people line up according the year they have. When they announce the year, let that person share one *interesting* fact about them self in relation to that year.

Tie in to Business

- Incorporate a piece of corporate history about each of the companies/departments with each report out. Research a “positive” fact or figure about the industry and each of the companies/each year for each of the years represented with the coins. When the participants exchange their information, share a piece of the corporate history.
- Goal is to give perspective to the continuum of change.
- Provides positive “press” to both companies
- Transitions to the future state – what will people say about this company in 2011?



SCAVENGER HUNT

Set Up

You are about to begin a scavenger hunt with several members of this group. The object of the game is to collect all of the items listed below as quickly as possible. You may talk with anyone in the group. You may not leave the room. You must associate each item with the person who gave it to you. You may not get more than two items from any one person.

Once I have assigned groups, you may begin play. When your team is finished, your team should loudly announce the phrase “hunt over” to the rest of the group. Be prepared to say where you got each item.

Divide the items listed on the following amongst teams so that they are not looking for the same items

Materials Needed

Lists printed out for each team

Time

Once a team calls “hunt over,” have them review each of the items, where they got them, and from whom.

Variations

- Instead of using actual items, list activities and facts as the items to find. For instance, “plays piano.” The object of the game is to find someone who plays the piano and associate the person’s name with that item.

Tie in to Business

- Discuss that it can sometimes feel like a scavenger out there. Why is that?

Note: I’ve also done this where I created a scavenger hunt about the company if the meeting is on-site. You can have interesting facts about the physical layout of the building or people that need to be found. This is helpful to new members who are trying to feel more connected to your company and also works with existing staff who take things for granted.

You can then connect to “*How can we truncate the learning curve when trying to navigate the resources within our company?*”

Typical Items for Scavenger Hunt

Consider the cultures present in the room and if there are items that are reflective of that culture, be sure to include them. Be careful not to make the list based upon your own cultural biases.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A Driver's License2. A Baby Photo3. A Bobby Pin4. A Store Receipt5. A 1979 or Earlier Penny6. A Piece of Candy7. A Pencil with Eraser8. A Lipstick Case9. A Business Card10. A Scarf	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. A Picture of a Flower12. A Coffee Cup13. A Marker14. A Piece of Candy15. A Store Credit Card16. A Pair of Glasses17. A Magazine or Book18. An Elastic Band19. A Book Marker20. A Picture of a Cat/Dog21. A Corkscrew
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THE MAGIC LAMP



You and your team have just found a lamp. You rub it, and surprise! A genie appears. The genie grants you three wishes. You are allowed to make three wishes at work.

We have all experienced high performing and low performing teams. As we are about to begin working together, what would your three wishes be for how this project team works / functions together?

DIRECTIONS

1. Divide into groups of three to five people and give teams a piece of flipchart paper and a marker.
2. Once you have your materials, design your wish list for your genie. When you are finished, post it on the wall.

Materials Needed

Old Brass Lamp
Flipchart Paper
Markers
Tape

Time

Allow five to ten minutes for setup, writing, and posting lists on the wall. Allow five minutes for debriefing. If possible, leave the lists posted throughout your training to encourage further introductions and discussions.

Connection to Business

- Provides insight into to what people see as positive/negative. Ideally, members from each organization have shared views providing you with a key opportunity to highlight that you may be more similar than different
- Lays foundation for setting team values



ALL MIXED UP

You have just taken a job at a dictionary company. You are responsible for editing a new edition. The only problem is that some of the computers went on the fritz and wiped out various definitions. You have decided to “wing it” and make up definitions for the words of which you don’t know the meaning.

DIRECTIONS

1. In a moment, you will be handed a card. It will contain either a word or a word and a definition. (words should be unique to each of the organizations/departments – point is to highlight that our corporate language is not always transparent to new members)
2. When I say *start*, you will need to move around the room and work with others to find the correct match between words and definitions. When a pair feels that they have successfully met each other, call **Match**. Read your word and definition to facilitator who will let you know if you are correct. If not correct, keep trying.

Note: I’ve also done this where each pair draws two cards and then they need to write a creative definition (which tend to be inane, often inappropriate, and hilarious definitions) This version provides a great opportunity for employees to bond by discovering each other personalities.

Materials Needed

Index Cards with Lesser Known Words
Index Cards with Definitions

Time

Allow 10 minutes to play the game.

Connections to Business:

- When companies merge, eh culture clash is far reaching. Even language can get in the way – need to be intentional about ensuring clarity
- We sometimes assume we should know everything when in fact – we cannot always be the expert on everything
- You want to clarify any terms that may not be fully understood.



TIMED BALL TOSS

An activity designed to energize group, foster the mindset that innovative thinking is not always easy to achieve or welcomed by all. Forces newly merged teams to work together.

Can work as a single team activity or if the group is large enough, split into two teams for a competitive slant.

DIRECTIONS

1. Divide into groups between 12 - 20 people with 1 monitor assigned to each group.
2. Challenge the group to toss the ball to other team members and so that each team member has caught the ball once and tossed it once. If you toss to someone who has already been “activated” the team needs to stop and start again...with the clock still running. (if newly merged teams are together add a rule that you cannot toss the ball to someone from your current project team)
3. Once the group has completed the task for the first time, they need to repeat again using the exact same pattern. If they fail, they continue to repeat until successful. It will be a timed event.
4. When all groups have finished, post times and then challenge the groups to try to reduce the time in half. Keep publicly posting times
5. Repeat this step several more times and challenge the group by stating that when you were doing this, your group had a time of 4.7 seconds.

Considerations:

Set up of room: will you have space – lots of fun to do outside
Who can you identify as “observers/time keepers”

Materials required:

Nerf balls (soccer size)
3 stop watches
Visual to post times

Time

20 – 25 minutes including set up/ activity and debrief.

Connections to Business:

- Multiple solutions can work: does not have to be a one size fits all
- Requires innovative solutions to excel and reach new levels of performance
- Some team members may think that some of the earlier results were good enough - not worth the effort, thus they quit
- Expectations/ Requirements/Project Scope/Resources are always changing and cannot be predicted
- Personalities get in the way and perhaps the person with the best idea was not allowed to contribute
- Failures may occur but team needs to persevere
- You need to celebrate success
- Results are public and may feel like failure

TWO TRUTHS AND A WISH



A classic get-to-know-you icebreaker in which each person records two truths and one “wish” – something they wish was true. For example, my wish might be that I could play the piano. I would then write *“I have been playing the piano since I was 7.”*

Participants attempt to guess which of the three statements is a wish.

DIRECTIONS

1. Distribute index cards to each person.
2. Have them record two little known facts about themselves and something that they “wish” was true about themselves..
3. Encourage the group to mix up the order between truths and wish
4. Once done, their cards need to be taped to their backs (requires support from people nearest to them)
5. Have participants “roam” around the room reading each other’s cards. They will then place a checkmark beside the item that they think is the wish.
6. Do not tell the person which one you voted for. It’s a lot of fun for each person to see the results on his/her card once everyone has voted.
7. Once everyone has read and voted on everyone else’s card, return to your seats and begin with one person. Have that person stand and introduce self to the team and then read their three items with the number of votes cast for each item. Then reveal to the group which item was the wish.

Materials required:

- Large Index cards
- Masking Tape
- Pens/pencils for voting

Time

- 20 – 25 minutes including set up/ activity and debrief.

Connection to Business

- We may be surprised by what we *think* we know versus what we actually know
- Energizer intended to help people to get to know each other more quickly

- Can transition into discussion about how team member can contribute to this project based upon a little known business /experience fact

MAGIC CARPET RIDE



Tell the class that they have been invited to visit a tiny mysterious country high within the Himalayas. However, they can only fly to this country by a flying carpet. The emperor of this country has sent some of his most beautiful handmade magic carpets to take you.

DIRECTIONS

SET UP

When you put the carpets down, they should be close enough that one team may figure out that they can step onto someone else's carpet without being obvious (collaboration versus competition). Do not use the word "*competition*" when setting up the following directions.

1. Divide group into teams of about 6 - 8 – the smaller the group – key point: the smaller the carpet
2. Ask each group to board one carpet now.
3. Inform the group that the carpets are now taking off and they are flying.
4. If anyone of them falls off the carpet, there carpet will be off balance and they will crash. So they need to be sure that all members of their group are comfortable, steady, and securely planted on the carpet (should require them to get close to one another)
5. After about 15 seconds, announce that you have just received word from one of your contacts in the village – it turns out that they have accidentally boarded the wrong side of the carpet. The emperor is expecting to look up into the sky and see his beautiful tapestries – if he does not it will bring great shame to his people. They need to somehow turn the carpet upside down. Sounds simple, but you are high up in the air -- no one can step off the carpet without falling. They are at great risk of insulting the emperor so they must act quickly to flip the carpets over.

Timing: 15 – 45 minutes depending upon the group

Materials needed: depending upon the size of the group, a few large towels or table cloths

Connection to Business This is a great experiential exercise which can be used to highlight / make points related to teamwork, planning, communication and coordination of effort. The trick (and the “Aha”) for this exercise is that participants have to move between towels (i.e.: leave their towel and go to “someone else’s”).

- Groups typically view it as competitive
- Feels impossible initially – once the typical solutions are used, people begin to “quit”
- How did teams leverage knowledge as a whole? What price was paid because the group did not collaborate / share best practices, etc
- Multiple solutions may exist

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THE MISSING PARTNER



Tell the class that they have been invited to visit a tiny mysterious country high within the Himalayas. However, they can only fly to this country by a flying carpet. The emperor of this country has sent some of his most beautiful handmade magic carpets to take you.

DIRECTIONS

Timing: 5 - 10 minutes

Purpose: Group competition, Social Networking - When you want to illustrate the value of teamwork / pooled resources

Materials/Prep needed: One copy of a list of 30 partners (see below) per pair of participants

Group size: Any

1. Distribute a worksheet containing list of thirty individuals who achieved their success and fame because they chose the right partner. Include only one name for each partnership: Bonnie for Bonnie & Clyde, Procter for Procter & Gamble, Hewlett for Hewlett-Packard, etc. Use partners that represent multiple global nationalities. If merging teams from two nations, be sure to use equal number of pairs from both.
2. Divide seminar participants into two-person teams, working together to find the answers.
3. If multiple nationalities are present, be sure to partner people from different cultures.
4. Also, ask each team to add three more famous duos to the list.
5. The first two-person team to identify all the missing partners and add three other famous pairs is declared the winner.

This is a lively, fun exercise – one that helps you underscore the value of pooling your talents with another person who has the same objective.

SHERPA TREKKER



Experiential activity that involves paired teams, one of whom is blindfolded (Trekker) and a lead who cannot speak (Sherpa). The Sherpa needs to lead the Trekker through an obstacle course – without causing injury.

DIRECTIONS

Timing: 30 minutes to complete and 30 - 45 minutes to debrief

1. Identify 2 or 3 people to help you “monitor” the safety and progression of this activity
2. Identify participants who are willing to be blindfolded for an activity. You must get ½ of the group to volunteer. Show them the blindfolds to reduce anxiety. These people have just become Trekkers.
3. The remaining people have just become Sherpas.
4. Have the Trekkers select a Sherpa (whom they do not know) to be their partner for this activity. Spend one minute introducing yourselves to each other.
5. Have the groups take a seat and then set up the activity for them.
 - a. They are about to begin their lifelong quest to summit Mt Everest. Trekkers come from all parts of the world to do this and prepare /condition their bodies for environmental conditions that are unique to Everest given its altitude. Any of the successful summits have involved a partnership with Sherpas, a group of people who are indigenous to the area. Sherpas bodies have fully acclimatized to these harsh conditions. Their bodies actually require less oxygen to survive, they can withstand colder temperatures, and they do not succumb to snow blindness.
 - b. But – Sherpas do not speak any other language than their own dialect which is so obscure, that it is not written down. In other words, Trekkers cannot learn to speak the Sherpa’s language prior to the climb.

- c. They must learn to communicate without using words or sounds since the conditions are so windy on the mountain and the Trekkers are so bundled, that any verbal cues will be swept away.
6. Rule #1 – Working in your pairs, you will have two minutes to develop a communication strategy recognizing that one of you is blindfolded (due to an unforeseen case of snow blindness) and you cannot speak. Also – because the conditions on Everest change every day depending upon the weather, you do not know what the obstacles look like yet. So, starting now, you have 2 minutes. Begin. (groups will start to ask things Like, Can I touch the person – respond y saying you can do whatever you want as long as you are not speaking or peeking!
7. After 2 minutes announce “Folks, I need to interrupt -- We just got word from Base Camp that the conditions are favorable so we must begin.”
8. Instruct the Trekkers that they must leave the room while the obstacle course is set up. Have one of the facilitators take them out in the hallway.
9. Show the obstacle course to the Sherpas. They will begin to groan (are you kidding? We didn’t know that we would have to do that – we didn’t plan for that We are doomed etc”
10. Walk through the course and stress **safety!** Do not let Trekkers fall.
11. Once the Sherpas are satisfied that they understand the course, go out and prepare the Trekkers. Ask them to put their blindfolds on and let them know that the next person that they will approach by should be there Sherpa. Wish them luck and then leave them alone in the hallway (where they will become paranoid that they are being set up – they have a low level of trust right now)
12. Wait about one minute to get the anxiety up and then instruct the Sherpas to go and retrieve their Trekker **without Talking** - the activity has begun.

What to observe:

Some Sherpas are very supportive physically – pat on the shoulder – rubbing the hand

Trekkers are amazingly stiff when they start

Some Sherpas push their Trekker along without regard for their comfort safety

Some Sherpas “cut in front of” other pairs and risk injury

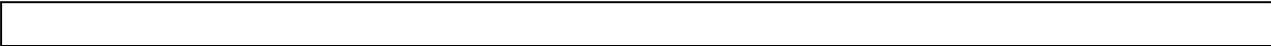
People are competing as pairs

Some Sherpas get frustrated with the lack of skill of their Trekker

Some Sherpas help other pairs and share best practices

You begin to see the Trekkers moving more confidently and allowing themselves to be led more easily as trust builds

13. Once a team has finished all obstacles, let them know that they can take the blindfold off but absolutely **NO Talking / laughing** while the other teams are still working.
14. Once all teams have finished, have a round of applause and then show the Trekkers what they did at each of the obstacle course stations.
15. Divide into Sherpa teams and Trekker teams and provide them with the debrief questions so that they can compare and contrast their experiences.
16. Conduct a large discussion after they have completed their worksheets. Alternate between both Sherpas and Trekkers to keep energy up.
17. Ask at the end: How does this map back to the challenges and opportunities we have as a newly formed team?
 - a. How will we intentionally work to build trust?
 - b. How important is it that we leverage learning?
 - c. How are we going to manage uncertainty / ever changing conditions / lack of specific direction?





BINGO – TIC TAC TOE

This is a great way to:

- Warm up a group at the start of a team meeting
- Demonstrate to an intact team who thinks that they “know everything” that we can always discover new things if we seek to do so
- Get a new team to bond more quickly

DIRECTIONS: You have a few options of how to *play*

Option 1: The first to get 5 in a row wins (up, across, or diagonal)

Option 2: They need to record every person’s name in at least one box. Once they have all team member’s name on the board, they call out Bingo

Option 3: A timed contest to see who can fill in the most names in a given amount of time (multiple names can go in the same box)

Rules to Share: The following rules apply to all of the above options:

1. Group needs to get up and walk around with their card and a pen.
2. You are only allowed to ask one person at a time a direct question such as: “Do you have food allergies?” If the response is *yes*, then write that person’s name in the box. If the answer is *no*, you need to move to another person and ask a question of that individual.
3. You cannot ask the same person two questions in a row.
4. You can go back to the same person after having asked at least two other people questions.
5. Once you have completed the task, call out BINGO and then read your results to the rest of the group to be sure you are correct.

Materials Needed

Bingo Cards – one for each person

Approximate Time Required

Depending upon the size of the group and the number of ways to win, allow 10 – 15 minutes to play the game. If the group is small, include two ways to win so that the game extends beyond just a few minutes.

Bet You Didn't Know...Tic Tac Toe

I own 6 cars – 2 are from the '60s

Last Sunday I had a flying squirrel in my house (I didn't know these creatures exist)

I have to vacuum my bathroom floor EVERY SINGLE morning before I leave my house...I have missed trains and consequently been late to work

I hate soups that are not clear

I tried playing the trumpet in middle school but the band leader switched me to baritone due to the size of my lips and my overbite!

I met Sting, from the group POLICE, in person at a family party and got photos together

I enjoy taking risks.

I've met the musical artist David Guetta.

I've saved a friend after they fell through ice.

I graduated 2nd to last in high school, but was on Dean's list in my University, GPA 3.6

I am deathly afraid of swimming in deep ocean water

I climbed the highest sand dune in the world

After hiking an entire day in a remote part of Southern France, I discovered that I had forgotten to pack all of the poles to hold the tent up

I went to Yosemite and rode a horse for the first time across bridges with water underneath and the horse kept going in circles. (very scary)

I've never tasted cauliflower and I never will

I've lived on three and traveled to six of the seven continents

I played the role of a vulture in my school performance of Noah's ark.

Has never been stung by a bee

Is afraid of driving over tall bridges

I love karaoke

Somedays I don't know my left from my right so I just point instead when giving directions.

Has a dog named Biscuit

My first concert EVER was last year

I love to dance

I have no sense of smell