Traffic Jam

From Teampedia

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Objectives

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To work on communication, problem solving, to understand roles of leader and follower within the group.

Group Size

At least six people (divided into two even teams).

Materials

Enough place markers for each participant plus one. Place markers can be anything that people can reasonably stand on (e.g. paper plates, or pieces of 8.5x11 paper) or can be a small area marked on the ground with chalk or masking tape. The key is to make the place markers big enough for one person to stand on easily, but small enough that two people have to balance carefully to both fit on the marker.

Set Up

Set up a line of place markers, one for each person plus one extra. Divide the group into two even teams. Have each person stand on a place marker with one space in between the two teams. Have each team facing toward the middle space. The following diagram shows the starting placement with one team represented by numbers and the other represented by letters.
Directions

The goal is to have the two teams exchange places and end up in the same order on the opposite side of the open space. The following diagram shows the starting and ending positions with arrows indicating the direction each participant should move.

The participants may not touch anything but the markers and each other (imagine a hot lava flowing all around the markers). The only "allowed" moves are: a person can move 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 "forbidden" moves include: any move backwards, any move, which involves two people moving at once. If at any time a participant makes a "forbidden" move, or anyone steps off the markers, all participants must return to the starting position.

Additional challenges: Give them a time limit. Blindfold or ask certain member to close their eyes. Instruct certain members to stay silent. If they are having a particularly frustrating time, call time out and arrange their line in more of a horseshoe pattern, so they can see each other, do not forget to ask about this change in the debrief.

Debrief

When time is up or they have completed the initiative, ask them the following discussion starter questions:

- What worked well?
- What was challenging?
- What skills and actions helped?
- Who were the leaders of this activity? the followers?
- How was it for the people on the ends?
- Did anyone feel excluded from the process?
- How would you relate this back to your job/class/team?

Solution

See alternative description and "solution" here: http://www.squarewheels.com/articles/trafficjam.html

Videos

- Traffic Jam - Duct Tape Teambuilding Game: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QQunc5T9B8
- How to Play Traffic Jam: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KizRWftfT5uQ
Traffic Jam: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5W_xH5CgbY&feature=related


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