

Egg Drop (Product Packaging & Protection)

Objectives

- To illustrate group problem-solving skills and offer opportunities for groups to practice effective communication and problem solving
- To provide a group with a challenging problem to solve that supports innovation, creativity, and quality control
- When presented to multiple groups simultaneously, to heighten creativity and the pressures of market dynamics, innovation, and competition
- To experience EQ elements, Type preferences, conflict or motivational styles, and reversals in action when used in conjunction with the corresponding organization development instruments

Trainer Instructions

Note: This exercise is best done with a group at the latter portion of a half day or full day or towards the conclusion of a multi-day program of experiential activities. The focus here is on creative problem solving and communication. This can induce or magnify the performing phase of the group development model.

1. The task at hand is to protect a raw egg from breaking when dropping it from increasing heights by building protective systems.
2. Trainer Instructions for Group: Your company has been asked to design a complete packaging system for a new fragile product (hold up the egg). The packaging needs to be assembled from these two materials (straw and tape). Once the product is assembled, we will test them with a series of drops from increasing heights (indicate drop area). Designs may not be altered in any manner once the testing begins. The group with the system that withstands multiple drops from increasing heights without any damage of the product (i.e. that last egg to break), wins the contract for mass production of that packaging system. Any questions?...Extra points will be awarded for dramatic presentations. You have 30 minutes to plan and construct your systems. GO!
3. Facilitator instructs the group/groups to only use the materials provided (straws and tape). Once they arrive at a design, they have to stick with it. Designs cannot be changed in between drops.
4. If a ladder is used, have someone holding it firmly and spot anyone who climbs it.

Category

Group Problem Solving

Post Introduction to Type, post introduction to EQ-i Feedback, or introduction to other organization development psychometric assessment instrument

Exercise Stage

Basic stand alone, as part of a half day to a full day of experiential activities

Post-intro to an organization development instrument

Number of Participants

Minimum: 8 (possible for a small group to engage with this content but the benefits of group-level interaction are missing)

Ideal: 10

Maximum: determined by available space and resources

Time Required

Minimum: 30 minutes

Maximum: 60 minutes

(larger groups need to be divided into smaller groups, which takes more time, and the amount of discussion/process of exercise output is a variable affecting time)

Materials Needed

- One raw egg per group (facilitator can substitute hard boiled eggs for raw ones to avoid possibility of having to clean up a real mess)
- 24 rigid drinking straws per group
- 4 feet of masking tape per group
- Chair, ladder, or other means of getting to greater height



Processing Questions Specific to This Activity

- What worked well – what are best practices – in getting the task completed?
- Was there any confusion in communication?
- What does that remind us of, if we put it in work context?
- Did anyone micromanage?

Debriefing Instructions

1. Ask the processing questions above throughout the exercise or at the end, after they complete the task.
2. Ask the group if everyone's ideas were heard.
3. Ask how welcoming the group was to new ideas.
4. If there is more than one group involved, ask them if they cooperated or competed in coming up with a design
5. Facilitate group realization that the product of protecting the effort is not as important here as the process of sharing ideas among the different groups in the same company. Help the team realize that the overall best design is the company's goal.

Debriefing Instructions If Activity is Used After MBTI Introduction

Note: This is a great activity to see how Extraverts and Introverts manage issues around communication as well as how J and P issues surface around planning. This activity can highlight other issues around the Data Gathering Function and around the Decision Making Function.

1. Was everyone heard?
2. Was there enough airtime management?
3. Was there a plan?
4. Were people more task-focused or people-focused? Was there balance?

Debriefing Instruction If Activity is Used After EQ-i Introduction

Note: This is a great activity to see how behaviors associated with many EQ elements manifest. Most commonly encountered behaviors associated with EQ elements on this activity are: Emotional Self Awareness, Emotional Expression, Assertiveness, Independence, Empathy, Problem Solving, Social Responsibility, Impulse Control and Flexibility. The list of questions to ask around EQ elements are numerous, but some common ones are:

1. Did anyone feel frustrated at some point?
2. Were you able to identify the feelings experienced and what was causing them?
3. How did you express or deal with that?
4. Did anyone dominate the conversation or speak incessantly?
5. Was anyone inhibited from voicing their opinion about how you should



solve this problem?

6. How assertive were you?
7. Did people think of new ideas that had not been brought up before?
Did they voice that?
8. How did your emotions, as you experienced them, help or get in the way of working together on solving the challenging environment of varying opinions and perspectives?
9. How flexible were you in adopting an idea and changing your views/emotions about it?
10. Were you able to approach the changing directions with an open mind or were you stuck on the “old way of doing things?”

