

The Puzzle Initiative

Objectives

- To help the group with communication issues, perceived competition, collaboration barriers, and increase goal clarification
- To help a group diagnose whether they are in Storming or Performing Stages and what will help propel them to the performing stage
- To illustrate group problem-solving skills and offer opportunities for testing their negotiation and communication skills
- To experience EQ elements or Type preferences in action (if this exercise is used in conjunction with these or other assessment instruments)

Trainer Instructions

Note: This exercise is best done with a group toward the end of a full day or on the second day of a multi-day experiential activities program. In summary, the task is to complete ONE puzzle by having to trade puzzle pieces between subgroups, putting together one complete puzzle as quickly as possible. Through solving this problem, the group will demonstrate their communication and negotiation abilities.

1. As pre-work, trainer acquires three *identical* 24-piece puzzles, removing 2/3 of the pieces and leaving only 1/3 of the pieces in each box, so that each of the three boxes contains 8 pieces from each of the three puzzles. Ensure that the pieces left in each box can amount to completing one puzzle.
2. Divide the group into 3 smaller sub-groups. Provide each sub-group with a puzzle box. Each box has 24 pieces. However, only 8 of the 24 pieces belong to/are placed in the box. The other pieces belong to the other boxes. A common table is set aside for exchanging the pieces between teams.
3. The facilitator instructs the team that they are sub-groups working for the same company, with a deadline quickly approaching.
4. The facilitator then gives the group the following ground rules:
 - No communication, verbal or non-verbal, may happen between the small groups outside the negotiation station.
 - For negotiation to take place, a representative from each group must be present in the negotiation area. Each group chooses new representative for each negotiation, rotating the group members. No member can negotiate twice before every other member of that subgroup had

Category

Group Storming or Performing Stages

Group Problem Solving

Post Introduction to Type, Temperaments, EQ-i, or other organization development instrument.

Exercise Stage

Basic stand alone, as part of full or multi-day of experiential program of experiential activities

Number of Participants

Minimum: 6 (possible for a small group to engage with this content—but the benefits of group-level interaction are missing)

Ideal: 9

Maximum: 12

Time Required

Minimum: 20 minutes

Maximum: 45 minutes

Materials Needed

- Three identical 24 piece puzzles (mixed up so that each box contains 1/3 of the pieces of each puzzle). Make sure that you leave pieces in each puzzle that can add up to at least one complete puzzle
- Boundary tape for 4 small areas. Have a table in each area for the groups to work at would be helpful, but not essential



negotiated at least once.

- When your group is ready for negotiation a member would raise her/his hand, and when all groups are ready then you would move into the negotiation station.
 - Negotiators may bring up to three puzzle pieces with them to each negotiation. They may not bring anything else with you to these meetings.
 - There will be no talking in the negotiation station.
 - You may only use the materials provided.
5. Sub-group meetings/working is punctuated by negotiations until all groups have completed the puzzle correctly.
 6. Trainer: expected outcomes are perceived competition, collaboration barriers, goal clarification, and communication.
 7. Ask the group the following questions:

Processing Questions

- In what ways does this exercise reflect your daily work?
- What worked well – what are some best practices – in getting the puzzle constructed?
- Did the teams (within the sub-group and sub-group to sub-group) compete or cooperate?
- What does that remind you of in a work context?
- Which approach created the highest level of success?
- Why did the teams choose the approach they took toward working or not working with the other teams?
- Which approaches were successful? Which were not?

Debriefing Instructions

1. Ask the processing questions above throughout the exercise or at the end.
2. Ask the group if everyone's ideas were heard.
3. Ask how welcoming the group was to new ideas.

Debriefing Instructions If Activity is Used After Type Introduction

Note: This is a great activity to see how Extraverts and Introverts manage issues around communication during the planning phase, 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. Did you notice a difference between how Js and Ps went into the



implementation phase?

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, 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 these feelings?
4. Did some people take up significantly more airtime than others—dominating the conversation?
5. Was anyone inhibited from voicing his/her opinion about how the problem should be solved?
6. How assertive were you?
7. How likely were you to think of the entire group verses your sub-group?
8. Did people think of new ideas—did you?
9. 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?
10. How flexible were you in adopting an idea and changing your views/emotions about it?

