

TEAM BUILDING MANUAL

UNT Center for Leadership and Service

Team Building Manual

Center for Leadership and Service

University of North Texas

1155 Union Cir, Denton, TX 76201

Phone: 940-565-3021

Email: leadandserve@unt.edu

<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/center-for-leadership-and-service>

Table of Contents

Title Page	1
Contact Information	2
Table Of Contents	3
Introduction	4-5

PART 1 Small Groups 6

Ice Breakers	7
<i>2 Truths, 1 Lie</i>	
<i>Green Glass Door</i>	
<i>Ninja!</i>	8
<i>Baby Picture Game</i>	
<i>Balloon Belly Break</i>	9
<i>Trashketball</i>	
<i>Random Chairs</i>	10
<i>Keep it Up!</i>	
<i>The Name Game</i>	11
<i>Telephone, but on Paper</i>	

Team Builders	12
<i>The Perfect Square</i>	
<i>The Egg Drop</i>	
<i>The MineField</i>	13
<i>Blind Drawing</i>	

PART 2 Large Groups 14

Team Builders	15
<i>Human Knot</i>	
<i>Telephone Game</i>	
<i>Birthday Lineup</i>	16
<i>Paper Tower</i>	
<i>Build It Higher</i>	17

<i>Blindfold Retriever</i>	
<i>The Common Book</i>	18
<i>Find the Common Thread</i>	
<i>Wink Murder</i>	19
<i>A Shrinking Vessel</i>	
Ice Breakers	20
<i>Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament</i>	
<i>Whodunit</i>	
<i>Game of Possibilities</i>	21
<i>M&M's</i>	
<i>Paper Plane Game</i>	22
<i>Year of the Coin</i>	
<i>One Worded Karaoke</i>	23
<i>Connecting Circle</i>	
<i>Amazing Adjectives</i>	24
<i>Who Am I?</i>	

Introduction

The Center for Leadership and Service at the University of North Texas develops learning opportunities and provides collaborative programs for students to engage as active citizens and leaders in the community. Within these programs, we focus on building leadership and most importantly, team building.

Team Building is an essential part of growing small and large groups, professionally and personally. This manual includes various exercises that aim to team build in all areas including communication, problem-solving, power distribution, etc.

Small Groups

Ice Breakers

2 Truths, 1 Lie

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 10-15 minutes

Number of Participants: Five or more people

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Sit everyone in a circle facing each other. Have each person come up with three facts about themselves and one lie. The lie should be realistic instead of extravagant. Go around the circle and have each person state the three facts and a lie in a random order, without revealing which is the lie. After someone shares, the others must guess which is the lie.

Objective: This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminate snap judgments of colleagues and gives introverts an equal chance to share some facts about themselves. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.

Green Glass Door

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: depends

Number of Participants: 3+

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Tell participants that we are going on a picnic and in order to come on the picnic, they need to go through the green glass door. To get through the green glass door each participant must bring something to the picnic with double letters. (e.g. door, floor, moon, etc.) You keep continuing until more and more people can catch on. The game ends whenever you decide.

Objective: This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminates awkwardness. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.

NINJA!

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *time will vary, should not exceed 15 minutes*

Number of Participants:

Tools Needed: *paper*

Rules: *With just a few sheets of paper, teams get five minutes to build the tallest paper tower they can. Teams can't use any other materials (no tape, glue, etc.). They can only fold or tear their pieces of paper. When it's over, take time to discuss what your team members learned from the activity.*

Objective: *This game for team building relies heavily on good communication and teamwork. It also builds a healthy competitive environment.*

Baby Picture Game

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *Time will vary*

Number of Participants: 5+ people

Tools Needed: *baby pictures from each person*

Rules: *Ask for staff members to email photos of themselves as children dressed as a profession – maybe from Halloween or playing dress-up. Then, guess which person is pictured. You'll learn more about your employees as children, and get to laugh at some silly moments.*

Objective: *This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminate awkwardness. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.*

Balloon Belly Break

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *time will vary*

Number of Participants: 5+ people

Tools Needed: *balloons*

Rules: *This adult icebreaker game is best played by pairing couples, or at least people who know each other well, at their own comfort. The goal is to try to break a blown-up balloon between two bellies. Have at least three blown up balloons for each pair. Have everyone stand or sit in a circle, with the blown-up balloons in the middle. They are to begin when you say, "Go!" The pair who burst the most balloons wins. You can set a timer for a specific amount of time - five minutes works well - if you wish.*

Objective: *This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminate awkwardness. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.*

Trashketball

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *Time will vary*

Number of Participants: 7+ people

Tools Needed: *paper, some type of bucket*

Rules: *Pass out a sheet of newspaper to each person and tell them to roll it into a tight ball. Have the participants stand at the far end of a room with a basket of some kind on the other side of the room. The object of this adult icebreaker game is to shoot as many balls into the bucket.*

Objective: *This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminate awkwardness. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.*

Random Chairs

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *Time will vary*

Number of Participants: 5+ people

Tools Needed: Clear space, enough chairs for participants

Rules: *Set up a circle of chairs for everyone except you. Stand in the middle of the circle and invite the group to sit on the chairs. Explain that the main goal of the game is to get a chair to sit on. The way to achieve that aim is by saying a statement that is true for you, and also true for most players in the group. So for example, if you have brown eyes, you can say “anyone who has brown eyes please change seat”. If that statement is true for anyone in the group, they must get up out of their chair and quickly move to a different chair.*

Objective: *This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminate awkwardness. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.*

Keep it up!

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *Time will vary*

Number of Participants: 5+ people

Tools Needed: Clear space, and a softish ball (volleyball, soccerball, etc.)

Rules: Invite everyone to stand in a circle. The idea of this game is for the group to keep the ball in the air. You can use any part of your body to tap the ball up, but you can't tap it more than once. For example, if you tap the ball up, a different person must tap it after you before you can tap it up again. See how many taps the group can get before the ball hits the floor or someone double taps.

Objective: *This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminate awkwardness. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.*

The Name Game

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *Time will vary*

Number of Participants: 5+ people

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Have everyone gather in a circle or open area. Go around the circle and have each person explain the meaning behind his or her name, any nicknames they have or had growing up, and anything else related that they'd like to share.

Objective: *This is a great ice breaker, especially for new teams. It helps eliminate awkwardness. It allows the team to get to know each other on a more personal and fun level.*

Telephone, but on paper

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *15-20 minutes*

Number of Participants: 6+ people

Tools Needed: Paper, Pencils

Rules: Gather participants in a circle, and have each person draw something of their choosing on a piece of paper. They can't tell anyone else what they're drawing. Next, they must pass the paper to the person to their right, who should fold the paper to hide the drawing and write what they think the picture depicts. This should continue, with each person in the circle reading the description, folding the paper over, and drawing a new picture of what they think the previous person is describing. At the end, each person reveals what their original drawing was supposed to depict.

Objective: *This icebreaker focuses on creativity and individual interpretation. It is sure to be a hit, with far-fetched interpretations leaving the group crying tears of laughter.*

Team Builders

The Perfect Square

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Number of Participants: 5 - 20 people

Tools Needed: A long piece of rope and a blindfold for everyone

Rules: Have your coworkers stand in a circle holding a piece of the rope. Then instruct everyone to put on their blindfold and set the rope on the floor. Have everyone take a walk a short distance away from the circle. Next, ask everyone to come back and try to form a square with the rope without removing their blindfolds. Set a time limit to make it more competitive. To make it even more difficult, instruct some team members to stay silent.

Objective: Focuses on strong communication and leadership skills. By instructing some team members to be silent, this game also requires an element of trust across the team, allowing team members to guide each other in the right direction.

The Egg Drop

Category: PROBLEM-SOLVING, COMMUNICATION

Time: a day

Number of Participants: 2 or more

Tools Needed: Egg, any other materials the team wants to use

Rules: A variety of tools and other materials should be provided to the teams. After the packages have been built, each team must also present a 30-second advert for their package, highlighting why it's unique and how it works. In the end, each group will have to drop their egg using their package to see if it really works. Aside from teaching the groups to work together and communicate, it also brings them together with the common goal of both winning the egg drop and successfully creating an egg package.

Objective: Focuses on strong communication and problem-solving skills. By working together and conquering obstacles, teams will learn to be successful through hardships.

The Mine Field

Category: COMMUNICATION, TRUST BUILDING, EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Time: 15-30 minutes

Number of Participants: 4-10 people (even numbers needed)

Tools Needed: Various handheld objects (combs, bottles, etc.), Blindfolds

Rules: Find an open space, such as an empty parking lot. Place the objects sporadically across the open space. Have everyone pair up, and make one person from each pair put on the blindfold. The other person must lead their teammate from one side of the open space to the other without stepping on the objects - using only verbal instructions. The blindfolded person can NOT speak at all. To make more difficult, make specific routes the blindfolded team member must walk.

Objective: *This icebreaker focuses on communication, effective listening, and trust-building.*

Blind Drawing

Category: COMMUNICATION, EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Time: 15-30 minutes

Number of Participants: 4-10 people

Tools Needed: Paper, markers

Rules: Participants stand in a straight line one behind the other facing the back of the person in front of you. Participants will place the blank paper on the back of the person in front of them. Using the marker, the participant at the end of the line will begin to draw a picture (ex: straight line) and the participant in front of them will follow that step. This will continue until the picture is finished.

Objective: *This icebreaker focuses on communication and following directions.*

Large Groups

Team Builders

Human Knot

Category: COMMUNICATION/TEAMWORK

Time: 5-6 minutes

Number of Participants: 8-20 people

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Everyone begins by standing in a circle facing each other, shoulder to shoulder.

Instruct everyone to put their right hand out and grab a random hand of someone across from them. Then, tell them to put their left hand out and grab another random hand from a different person across the circle. Within a set time limit, the group needs to untangle the knot of arms without releasing their hands. If the group is too large, make multiple smaller circles and have the separate groups compete.

Objective: This game for team building relies heavily on good communication and teamwork. It also results in a lot of great stories for the water cooler chat in the workplace.

The Telephone Game

Category: COMMUNICATION, ACTIVE LISTENING

Time: 25-30 minutes

Number of Participants: 15+

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Players must sit in a circle or stand in a straight line. They need to be close enough that whispering is possible, but not so close that players can hear each other whisper. The first person in the line or circle whispers a word or phrase into the ear of the person sitting or standing to their right. Players whisper the phrase to their neighbors until it reaches the last player in line. The last player says the word or phrase out loud so everyone can hear how much it has changed from the first whisper at the beginning of the circle or line.

Objective: This enables active listening skills and shows the impact of gossiping and misconceptions.

Birthday Lineup

Category: COMMUNICATION, TEAMWORK

Time: N/A

Number of Participants: 10+

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Without talking or using obvious hand signs or making any kind of noise as a signal, the team must line up by birthday month (not specific birth date). January is at the head of the line, with December at the end. When the team has lined up, have them call off their birthdays giving only month and day. Be prepared to be impressed with how close they come to the right order. And now everyone knows who has a birthday coming up. Happy birthday!

Objective: This enables deeper communication and builds effective teamwork.

Paper Tower

Category: TEAMWORK

Time: 5 minutes

Number of Participants: 3+ groups of 4+ people

Tools Needed: paper

Rules: With just a few sheets of paper, teams get five minutes to build the tallest paper tower they can. Teams can't use any other materials (no tape, glue, etc.). They can only fold or tear their pieces of paper. When it's over, take time to discuss what your team members learned from the activity.

Objective: This game for team building relies heavily on good communication and teamwork. It also builds a healthy competitive environment.

Build It Higher!

Category: TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION

Time: 15-20 minutes

Number of Participants: 3+ groups of 4+ people

Tools Needed: Tape, Marshmallows, Spaghetti Noodles

Rules: Divide players into groups of four or five and give each group the same amount of supplies. The teams must work together to create the highest structure they can, using only the tape, marshmallows, and spaghetti noodles provided.

Objective: This activity is a fun and creative way to improve individuals' ability to work as a team. It allows natural leaders to step forward and showcase their skills.

Blindfold Retriever

Category: TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION

Time: 15-20 minutes

Number of Participants: 3+ groups of 4+ people

Tools Needed: Blindfold, Random Objects

Rules: Divide the group into smaller teams of three or four. One team member should be blindfolded as teammates verbally guide them around the room to find certain objects. Participants take turns being blindfolded and guided.

Objective: This activity highlights the importance of communication and careful listening. It is a fun way to get teams working together and strategizing with one another.

The Common Book

Category: TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION

Time: 15-20 minutes

Number of Participants: 8+

Tools Needed: Notebook, Pens, Decorative Tapes, Glue, etc.

Rules: Place a large, blank scrapbook or journal in the common area. You could even fill it with prompts, asking participants to follow suggestions for their submissions if they're having a hard time deciding what to write themselves.

Objective: This activity highlights the importance of acknowledging the team around you and understanding people's strengths. This also helps build a healthy working environment.

Find the Common Thread

Category: TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION

Time: 15-20 minutes

Number of Participants: at least 3 groups of 4+

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Divide your team into groups, then tell them they must find one thing they have in common. This can include hobbies, music tastes, favorite food or even the last movie they have seen. After they have settled on their common thread, ask them to create a short list of traits or stereotypical qualities of people who share that trait.

Objective: This activity highlights the importance of acknowledging the team around you and understanding people's strengths. This also helps build a healthy working environment and helps people eliminate judgment.

Wink Murder

Category: TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION, ATTENTIVENESS

Time: 15-20 minutes

Number of Participants: 10+

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Ask your group to stand in a circle. Ask one person to leave the room - This person will be the detective of the game. Among those remaining in the room, have them select the participant who will play the role of a murderer. Once the detective returns to the room, they must stand at the centre of the circle.- The detective has THREE attempts to guess who the murderer is. While the detective spins to examine his possible suspect, the murderer winks at other participants while the detectives back are turned. Every participant the murderer winks at must die in a dramatic fashion. The murder wins by being the last participant standing. And then becomes the new detective.

Objective: This activity highlights the importance of communication and working together.

A Shrinking Vessel

Category: PROBLEM SOLVING

Time: 10-15 minutes

Number of Participants: 10+

Tools Needed: Rope

Rules: Using the rope, make a shape on the floor everyone can fit into. Slowly shrink the space over a time period of 10-15 minutes. Work together to figure out how to keep everyone within the shrinking boundaries.

Objective: This activity highlights the importance of adaptability in problem solving and working around obstacles in a team.

Ice Breakers

Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *varies depending on how large group is*

Number of Participants: 20+

Tools Needed: *none*

Rules: *With a twist: the losing players become the fan of the winners as the winner advances to the next round. This goes on until a final showdown with two large cheering crowds rooting for the last two.*

Objective: *This is a great ice breaker for large teams. It helps eliminate awkwardness and allows people to bond in a competitive, fun, and personal setting.*

Whodunit

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 20-25 minutes

Number of Participants: 15+ into small groups

Tools Needed: *notecards and a hat/bowl*

Rules: *Split up your employees into groups (or pairs if you have a small company). Have each person write down something interesting they've done on a notecard (e.g. skydiving, have lived in ten different states - the sillier the better). Put the note cards into a hat, give it a nice shake, and have each person draw a note card they will then read aloud. The reader must then try to guess "who done it" and why they came to that conclusion.*

Objective: *This game is good to get to know each other in a silly, personal level.*

Game of Possibilities

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 5-6 minutes

Number of Participants: 6+

Tools Needed: Any random objects

Rules: Give an object to one person in each group. One at a time, someone has to go up in front of the group and demonstrate a use for that object. The rest of the team must guess what the player is demonstrating. The demonstrator cannot speak, and the demonstration must be original.

Objective: This team-building exercise inspires creativity and individual innovation. It allows the awkwardness between new people to be eliminated.

M&M's

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 5-6 minutes

Number of Participants: 10+

Tools Needed: M&M's

Rules: Give each member of the team an M&M. Each color corresponds to a different question that the member has to answer.

Objective: This icebreaker inspires creativity and individual innovation. It allows the awkwardness between new people to be eliminated.

Paper Plane Game

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 15-20 minutes

Number of Participants: 10+

Tools Needed: Paper, Pen

Rules: Pass out different-colored sheets of paper to each person attending the meeting. Then ask everyone to write an interesting fact about themselves on the piece of paper and fold it into a paper airplane. Then, everyone launches their paper airplane to somewhere around the room. Then everyone retrieves one of the paper airplanes, reads the fact, and guesses whose paper airplane they got. It's fun to guess, and you learn new things about each other.

Objective: This icebreaker allows the awkwardness between new people to be eliminated and to learn more about those around them.

Year of the Coin

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 15-20 minutes

Number of Participants: 8+

Tools Needed: Coins

Rules: Sort through the bowl to make sure you don't have any coins that are too old, then have everyone pick a coin out of the bowl. Go around and ask each person to share something they were doing the year the coin was minted. This is great for getting to know someone's past—and to test people's memories.

Objective: This icebreaker allows peers to tell stories about themselves and hear about others.

One Worded Karaoke

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: 25-30 minutes

Number of Participants: at least 5 groups of 4, 20 people

Tools Needed: None

Rules: A mediator will display a word and each group will have to sing a song that includes that word. (e.g. "baby" = Baby by Justin Bieber) The groups can not repeat songs that have been said by previous groups. The game goes on until one group is left. Can play multiple rounds and have a main triumphant based on the calculations.

Objective: This icebreaker allows those to think quickly and work together.

Connecting Circle

Category: COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Time: 25-30 minutes

Number of Participants: 15+ people

Tools Needed: None

Rules: The group members are asked to sit in a large circle. The group leader explains that one way to help remember someone's name is by associating it with something about them. An example can be given: "My name is John Doe and I love chicken" The leader then introduces him or herself and states a personal hobby or special interest in the preceding format. The participants are asked to take turns doing the same, and then repeat the name and hobby of the group member who preceded them. This is continued until the entire group has been introduced and each member has stated a special interest. If a group participant cannot remember all the names and/or special interests of the preceding group members, he or she should be encouraged to ask each participant their name and special interest.

Objective: This icebreaker allows everyone to introduce themselves and learn the names of their colleagues.

Amazing Adjectives

Category: NAME LEARNING

Time: 25-30 minutes

Number of Participants: 15+ people

Tools Needed: None

Rules: Ask each participant to choose an adjective that begins with the first letter of their first name and one that really matches their personality. Have them introduce themselves just as they wrote it on the card and allow time for others to ask questions.

Objective: This icebreaker allows everyone to introduce themselves and learn the names of their colleagues.

Who Am I?

Category: COMMUNICATION

Time: *varies depending on how large group is*

Number of Participants: 10+

Tools Needed: *Pens, Notecards*

Rules: Put a notecard with the name of a well-known figure on each student's back. Next, have the students walk around asking each other yes-or-no questions. First-person to figure out who they are wins!

Objective: *This icebreaker helps eliminate awkwardness and allows people to bond in a fun and personal setting, while getting to know their colleagues.*