

Alphabet Soup

Team Building Event



Creating Transformational Experiences
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Be Legendary

Introduction to Be Legendary and www.BuildingTeams.com

Be Legendary was founded to help organizations build successful teams through individual discovery and experience.

A **real** team requires many attributes to be successfully implemented:

- Common Goals
- Leading and Leadership
- Communication
- Trust
- Accountability
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making

As a company, we focus on every aspect of a real team. We have developed team building products and workshops to help your team successfully implement the attributes we have listed above.

We created these products to be as easy as possible to facilitate, yet powerful enough for you to achieve your desired outcomes.

You could have purchased, or may even own, any number of books on team building activities with hundreds of exercises. But, if you are like most of our customers, after looking through the book, you are left more confused than ever, wringing your hands and wondering,

*'Which one of these activities is **actually** going to work!?'*

This is where we come in and we are here to help you every step of the way.

You did not simply purchase this activity; you purchased our professional expertise. You can call and speak with any one of our facilitators about your specific needs, group, and environment. We are here to help make sure this event will work for you and to provide suggestions for tailoring it to fit your team's needs.

There may be times when all you need is to talk to someone and be reassured that the activity **will work**. We are more than happy to do this as many times as necessary until you feel completely confident with your choice and with facilitating the exercise.

This is the same approach we take with our own workshops, so you may want to consider giving us a call for your next training event, retreat, meeting or conference to find out how we can help you.

Make it a great day!

Be Legendary Facilitative Staff

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Complete Instructions to Run a Successful Event



Purpose

This event is designed to stimulate dialogue about how team members can work together to be more efficient and effective.

Insight is gained into how teams can work toward continual improvement. Participants will learn how to discover the best way for the team to get a job done.



Length of Exercise and Short Agenda

Total time needed is approximately 30 to 45 minutes and should not exceed 60 minutes. The duration depends largely upon how quickly your group accomplishes the task and how much discussion is generated.

- 5 Min. Introduce activity & cover ground rules (if any)
- 15 Min. Activity
- 20 Min. Group discussion
- 5 Min. Wrap up and set expectations – Miracle 10%

The discussion is the most important piece of this agenda as that is where the knowledge learned in the activity is transferred back to life, work, etc.

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Safety Tips

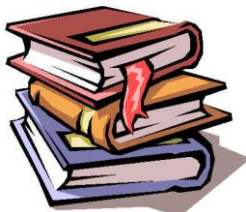
Participants will be running much of the time, so be sure to:

- Make sure the area is safe to run and people who are running are physically able.
- Clear any obstructions or be sure to tell participants to watch for anything that may trip them during the event.



Equipment You Will Need

- Enough open space for a 60 ft. webbing circle.
- 60 ft. webbing circle
- 26 Key Pads
- One 15 ft piece of webbing



Storyline

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to disarm the nuclear bomb so we can understand how it is constructed and find the producer of such a device. Everything we know about the bomb is as follows:

- The timer begins counting once we cross the start line.
- There are 15 minutes on the clock.
- When we come back across the start line the clock stops counting down.
- We must all take turns touching letters and only one of us may be on the giant keypad at one time.
- We may only touch one letter per entry into the circle.
- We may try as many times as possible before the 15 minutes expires.

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Alternate Storyline:

On your first day of the job at a soup factory, your work group has been asked to perform a quality check on the alphabet soup line. There are many bowls of alphabet soup to check, so you'll need to work fast. Your group needs to determine if each letter is present as quickly as possible. For quality control reasons, you need to actually touch each letter in some way and only one quality technician from your workgroup is allowed in the area at a time.

The success of the factory is in your hands. Good Luck!



Setup

1. Before the group arrives, have the circle laid out in a clear open space with the letters randomly placed in the middle face up. The 15-foot webbing start/finish line should be at least 25 feet away.
2. Have team members gather some distance from the activity behind the 15-foot piece of webbing.
3. Explain the story and letter requirements.
 - Bomb exercise: spell "Leadership" or some other word.
 - Alphabet Soup: touch the keypads in order from A to Z.
 - Make sure to have more letters to touch than participants.
4. Only one person may be in the circle at a time.
5. Only one letter may be touched at a time.
6. After each letter is touched, the person must be completely out of the circle before another letter may be touched. Participants are not to move the letters.
7. Time starts when the first person crosses the starting line.
8. Time stops when the last letter has been touched and all group members are back across the starting line.
9. Give the team some time to plan its strategy.

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10. Allow the team three or four attempts to improve its time.
 11. Have the team set a goal time and celebrate if they reach it.
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Variations

- ✓ No talking once participants cross the start/finish line.
 - ✓ Move some letters after each attempt.
 - ✓ Have the team to set the time they need to successfully accomplish the task before they actually attempt it. They will usually think they can do it much more quickly than is possible.
 - ✓ Allow the group five attempts to do it as fast as they can. See if they change their tactics or simply try to accomplish it the same way only faster.
 - ✓ Take one or two of the letters out. This presents a huge obstacle since everyone knows the ABC's or how to spell common words and expects the letters to be there. This creates a great processing point for later in the debriefing.
 - ✓ No two letters can be touched with the same body part. For example only one person can use their right hand, the next person must use a foot, a toe, their head, etc...
-



Dynamics to Watch For:

- The way people get the group to vote or provide input about the next step.
 - How the group spends time planning. Is it productive time?
 - Level of commitment to one idea and whether they are closed to all other ideas after that?
 - How well the group understands the plan and if they are committed to it as a group.
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Questions for Group Discussion

1. How different was your first attempt and last attempt?
 2. What was the quality of communication and did it improve over time?
 3. Were ideas shared, understood, and implemented?
 4. What could you have done to improve your planning?
 5. How is this activity <insert ideas from answers to questions above> similar to work?
 6. In what ways can you apply what you have learned from this activity back to your daily life at work (or school, etc)?
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Tips and Tricks from Our Professional Facilitators

For work settings:

- Manufacturing – the letters could represent a sequence in the manufacturing process or in the marketing/distribution channel.
 - Administration – the letters could represent a workflow, or paper trail.
 - Medical – the letters could represent steps in patient care
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Facilitative Tools

The key to a good facilitation is to let **the group** discover and learn what is appropriate for them. As the facilitator, do not try to manipulate the questioning to get the group to observe what **you** feel is important.

Below are some tools to help you with your questioning of the group. These tips will allow the group to discover their own learning without you manipulating the conversation.

Maintenance Tools

Throw-Back:

Team Member: "How can we possibly get through this obstacle?"

Facilitator: *"If it were possible, what would need to happen?"*

Share Observations:

Facilitator: *"It is very quiet. What does the silence mean?"*

Facilitator: *"It seems that not everyone is actively participating. Is there a reason for this?"*

Review Group Agreements:

It is very important to review base rules when the group becomes disinterested, when rule violations are occurring without thought, and when the group is attacking each other personally.

Facilitator: *"Remember the ground rules we discussed as we began to talk about this event." (If there are any)*

Check-In:

If a group is really struggling or people are becoming very frustrated, interrupt the activity and ask:

Facilitator: *"So what are you doing right now that is working?"*

Facilitator: *"What is not working?" "Why?"*

Accept/Legitimize/Deal With or Defer:

Create a safe environment for participation by:

Accepting an idea: Respond neutrally to a participant whose ideas are "out of synch" with others in the group

Legitimizing an idea: Discover the relevance of all contributions

Dealing with an idea: Agree together about how to move forward

Defer an idea by saying:

Facilitator: *"You're not convinced we're not getting anywhere? That's OK, you may be right. Would you be willing to hang on for 15 more minutes and see what happens? Yes? Thanks."*

"The issue you just raised sounds like it is important to you. Can we finish debriefing this event before we move on to discuss your issue?"

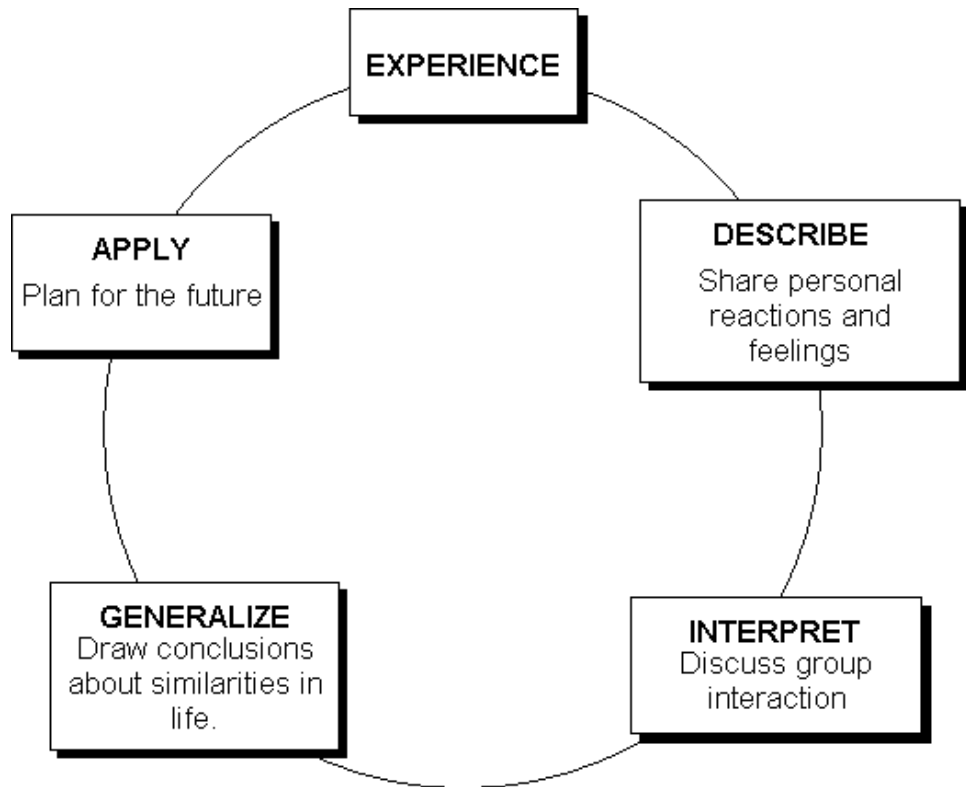
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Clarity Tools

	When You Hear:	Respond With:
Universals	All Every Never	"All?" "Every?" "Never?"
Rules	Should Shouldn't Must Can't	"What would happen if...?": "What causes or prevents...?" "Must?" "Can't?"
Non-Specific Verbs		"How specifically?"
Non-Specific Nouns	We It	"Who specifically?" "What specifically?"
Quantifiers	Too Much Too Many Too Expensive	"Compared to what?"
Statements	I Don't Know That Is Impossible	"Well, if you did know, ..." "If it were possible, what would need to happen?"

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Learning Cycle Stages



1975 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, University Associates

Stage 1: Experience

The experience forms the basis for the rest of the cycle. The facilitator presents an activity or game, which is specifically structured to provide an experience from which to draw relevant learning.

Stage 2: Describe

In this stage, the facilitator asks the participants about their feelings and reactions to the experience. The focus in this stage is on the individuals' feelings and experiences. Ask questions such as:

"How did you feel?"

"What did you do?"

"What happened to you?"

Stage 3: Interpret

In this stage, participants discuss what went on between group members during the exercise. Good questions to ask to help process individual reactions into collective ideas include:

"Why do you feel the way you do? "

"What caused that particular result or feeling? "

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Stage 4: Generalize

In this stage, the group generalizes their experience from this exercise and explores how the lessons might be reflected in other areas of their lives. Participants are asked to focus on situations in their personal or professional lives that are similar to those in the activity. The task is to identify similarities and state principles that can be applied to other situations. Some questions to ask include:

"What did you learn from the experience?"

"What other similar situations have you experienced?"

"How does this relate to your work life?"

Stage 5: Apply

Finally, participants are encouraged to decide on a course of action for the future. As a facilitator, ask questions such as:

"What do you want to remember from this experience?"

"What would you do differently in a similar situation?"

The Miracle 10% - One Idea for Closure

The Miracle 10%

This is quite possibly the easiest method you have in your arsenal for assuring participant buy-in regarding the process of change.

In front of the group simply ask:

"Who feels they can improve <insert topic, i.e. communication> by 10%?"

99.9% of the time, everyone will raise their hand. (This is not to say that these people are not already trying as hard as they can. They probably are, but that does not mean there is no room for improvement. Sometimes you need to make the distinction.)

"Does everyone agree that improving 10% is a reasonable goal?"

Everyone will agree. After all you are not asking for a HUGE change, just a small one. Talk about how each person's small contribution adds up to an overall large change.

"There are 15 of you here. So if each person improved 10% that would amount to a 150% improvement. What would work be like with that kind of improvement? How much better would our communication be? (Open up for discussion and create a specific list)

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“So it sounds like everyone agrees that with just a small individual effort to improve, we would all be much happier.”

“Each person then will be responsible for their own improvement. You will each need to hold yourself accountable.”

Set the right expectation.

“We all agree 10% improvement is a reasonable goal but I want you to think for just a moment what that REALLY means.”

“After we leave today, we will be expecting to see a difference in <insert topic>. But a 10% improvement means that 9 times out of 10, you will see me (use yourself as an example) doing the same old stuff I always did.”

“And the one time I actually do the right thing, you may not be around. So you may see me do the same old stuff 15 or 20 times before you actually see me improving. It is important to have trust in me and the fact that I have agreed to work on improving and that I am consciously doing so.”

“Each person here must have that same expectation and when you do catch someone doing something right, make every effort to point it out to the person who did it and to everyone else. It is hard to become tired of praise, regardless of how well you handle it.”

At the end of the workshop, you can have everyone spend 15 minutes writing out how they will improve by 10%. Simply writing “improve communication” or some other generic description is not good enough – participants must describe a specific action they will take that will result in a 10% improvement.

For example, *“When talking with others I will focus on, and listen to, what the person is saying and not on how I will respond.”*

Help participants drill down their goal behavior until they have something specific that they can act upon every single day.