

Exercise: ***Mystery Drawing!***

Activity Level: Beginner

**The Challenge:** Can you draw an image simply by listening to your partner tell you what shapes to make and where to put them?

**Learning Objectives:**

- This exercise is designed to introduce components of verbal communication and active listening, revealing team members' strengths and areas of opportunity.
- This exercise reveals how, even if team members believe they are strong verbal communicators and active listeners, there is always room for improvement.
- This exercise also gets people "out of their own heads." If team members are uncomfortable with group activities or experience-based games, this is a very easy and safe way for them to explore this style of learning.

**Use-case Criteria:**

- This is a great introductory activity and can be used as an ice breaker for team meetings and helps introduce the importance of clear communication.
- This exercise also helps build relationships between employees and different teams.

**Group Size:**

- 10 – 20 people, must be an even number to create pairs.

**Time Required:**

- 10 – 15 minutes.

**Materials:**

- 20 pre-printed and laminated images provided by Unscripted (airplane, house, clock, etc.)
- Lots of blank paper
- Clipboard or hard surface to lean on
- Pencils, pens, markers or crayons

**Instructions:**

1. Everyone pair up with a partner! Sit in chairs back to back, facing away from each other.
2. Partner #1 receives a laminated image. Partner #2 receives a clipboard/paper/pen.
3. Partner #1 has 90 seconds to describe the image to Partner #2, who cannot see the image but must attempt to replicate it using only guidance from Partner #1.
4. Partner #1 may only use SHAPES to describe the image.
  - a. If Partner #1 is describing a house, they CAN'T say: "it has windows and a front door."
  - b. Partner #1 CAN say: "draw a rectangle, inside of that rectangle, about half way down, almost center, draw a small circle close to the left side..."
5. Partner #2 can't ask questions except to ask for Partner #1 to slow down or repeat themselves.
6. After 90 seconds, Partner #1 and Partner #2 switch places and describe/draw a new image.

**Measurement:**

- Reconvening with the larger team, review each pair's drawings one at a time and compare with the original image.

- The team votes or otherwise comes to a consensus on which drawing best matches the original image, and that pair wins the exercise.
- To help raise the stakes, you can include a prize for the winning team. A little motivation can help get team members engaged.

**Team Discussion Questions:**

- What did you find challenging about this exercise?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What does the winning pair think helped them succeed?
- What did you notice about your verbal communication – did both partners feel it was clear?

Exercise: ***Tell a Story in 60 Seconds***

Activity Level: Beginner

**The Challenge:** Can you and your team collectively make up a story one word at a time for a full minute?

**Learning Objectives:**

- This exercise is designed to highlight the importance of verbal communication and active listening.
- Team members will be able to assess their individual strengths and areas of opportunity.
- They will also learn the importance of working together as a team, as this game is only as strong as its least engaged team member.

**Use-case Criteria:**

- This exercise is a great introductory activity and can be used as an ice breaker for team meetings, as it helps introduce the importance of verbal communication only using one word.
- This exercise is also helpful for bringing different teams and different levels of employees together, as hierarchy and titles will not help you succeed at this challenging exercise!

**Group Size:**

- 10 – 15 people.
- Larger teams should split into multiple groups of 10 – 15.

**Time Required:**

- 15 – 20 minutes.

**Materials:**

- No materials required.

**Instructions:**

1. Everybody stand in a circle (no more than 15 people in a circle).
2. The goal is to go around the circle and tell a story (made up on the spot), with each person saying only 1 word at a time. The story can be about anything and doesn't have to make total sense—just a little bit of sense. It's okay if it's just one long run-on sentence. Stories often start with something basic like "The, boy, went, to, the, store, to, buy, etc..."
3. You can also speak punctuation such as "period" or "question mark" to end a sentence.
4. The key rules are:
  - a. Don't say 2 words, only 1.
  - b. Don't pause for longer than 2 seconds to think of a word.
  - c. Don't say a word that doesn't continue the story.
  - d. Keep the story going around and around the circle as long as you can.
5. If any of these rules are broken, start over from the beginning.
6. You'll have 5 – 7 minutes to practice. Then, you'll be timed to see if you can keep a story going for a full 60 seconds.
7. If there's more than one team playing, the teams will compete against each other to see which team can go the longest.

**Measurement:**

- If there is only one team playing, give them the goal of getting to at least 60 seconds.
- If there is more than one team, the team that keeps the story going the longest wins.
- Remember to listen for someone saying two words, as well as any long pauses.
- To help raise the stakes, you can include a prize for the winning team. A little motivation can help get team members engaged.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Based on how you assessed your communication skills, was this task harder or easier than you thought it would be?
- What techniques helped you improve?
- Did you have trouble with this? Why or why not?
- What challenges did you have with actively listening to your team?