



Tower of Trust Activity

PURPOSE: This team-building exercise helps build trust on a team by providing a safe space for participants to take risks and make mistakes.

OBJECTIVE: To build the highest tower (29 stories minimum)

COMPETENCIES: Trust

SPACE/RESOURCES:

- Table(s) with four chairs
- Copy of instructions below
- Jenga game for each group

TIME: 30 minutes

GROUP SIZE: 4 participants and 4-5 groups

Directions:

1. The player who sets up the tower goes first. Play then continues to the left. **All team members must participate in every round.**
2. Each member will retrieve a block, **with one hand only**, from anywhere below the highest completed level. That block is then stacked on top of the tower. Blocks are to be **stacked flat**, with any number of blocks on each level.
3. Members may touch all of the blocks to find a loose one, but if a block is moved out of place, it must be fixed (using only one hand) **before** touching another block.
4. **If the tower falls, your team must start over.** (The tower must be completely restacked to its original form before starting again).

5. You have 15 minutes, but you may stop any time. The team that builds the **highest tower above ten levels** wins! (The tower is 18 stories as you begin; the winning tower must be 29 stories at minimum.)

Saboteurs:

1. A saboteur can be planted on the team by using a jar filled with folded papers that each team member draws from. One of the folded papers is labeled with the word “saboteur.” The team member that draws the paper with the word “saboteur” will play this role.
2. Saboteurs must be as **discreet** as possible.
3. Any member of the team may accuse a person of being a saboteur. When someone accuses another, all members of the team must stop building the trust tower for 30 seconds. A timekeeper must be appointed to track the 30 second pause.
4. When a person is accused, he or she must tell the truth. If the saboteur is correctly identified, he or she must sit out the remainder of the game.

****Another option to consider is to *not* have a saboteur. Directions for this are pretty straightforward:**

1. Remove the papers from the jar that read “saboteur”. Have participants select one piece of paper each.
2. Any member of the team may accuse a person of being a saboteur. When a person is accused, he or she must tell the truth. When someone accuses another, all members of the team must stop building the trust tower for 30 seconds. A timekeeper must be appointed to track the 30 second pause.

Debrief Questions for the Team:

1. For the group with the highest tower, why was your group so successful? How did trust impact your performance?
2. For the group with the lowest tower, what were your challenges? How did trust impact your performance?
3. For each team, what was the impact of a possible saboteur on team trust? How did you handle this issue? At what point in the tower building was your team's level of trust the highest?
4. As an individual, by the end of the activity, were you willing to make more risky moves or afraid to participate as the tower grew? Were you ever concerned about being blamed, labeled, or identified as the person who failed the team?
5. Why is a group with high trust more productive?

References:

Liza. (2017, May 1). Company Jenga Team Building Activity. Retrieved from <https://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/company-jenga-team-building-activity>.