



Team Communication Exercise

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Use this simple activity to help your employees improve their communication skills.

HOW TO USE: Learning to effectively communicate is an essential part of building an effective team. This Trainer's Toolbox activity will guide you and your employees through a simple team-building activity designed to improve communication skills. It includes questions for discussion so you can take the principles of communication and apply them to the group.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Split your employees into pairs. Each will need the following:

- A blank sheet of paper.
- Colored pencils, markers or pens.
- A large photo from a magazine.

LENGTH: About 10 to 15 minutes for the activity and discussion.

ACTIVITY GUIDE:

1. Opening comments: If we are going to operate as a team, it's important that we learn to communicate effectively. This activity will remind us that effective communication is as much about listening as it is about offering a clear explanation of what we need.
2. Ask each pair to sit with their backs to each other. Give person A in each pair a page from the magazine, being careful not to let person B in the team see the photo. Give person B a blank piece of paper and a drawing utensil.
3. The objective is for person B to draw the photo on the page from the magazine without actually looking at it. They are to replicate the photo based solely on the verbal description of the photo from person A. Encourage person B to ask questions as they draw, as effective communication is two-way.
4. Set a time limit. When time is up, ask teams to reflect on the following questions:
 - How close was the photo you drew to the actual photo?
 - Why do you think the photo was different or similar?
 - What were some details about the photo you got right, and why?
 - What were some details about the photo you got wrong, and why?
 - How could you and your team member have had better communication?
5. After allowing some time for teams to discuss these questions, bring the whole group back together and have groups share a little of what they discussed.
6. Ask how the entire store team can better communicate with other employees on the salesfloor.
7. Closing comments: When we learn to effectively communicate, we work together better as a team. We can also carry those same skills into our interactions with customers. Listening to customers is a big part of providing good service. Take at least one of the principles of effective communication you learned today and make an effort to apply it in your work this week.