



HEART U™

Team Building Activities



A team that works well together is more effective, more productive, and more successful — not to mention happier and more fun to work with! One of the best ways to foster team unity and increase engagement is to give your team some team-building activities from time-to-time. This guide can help get you started with some activity suggestions, but the success of the activities will depend largely on you!

Make sure to know the intended audience, plan ahead, and run the activities with enthusiasm and energy!

This document will present “in-person” team-building activities, as well as activities designed for virtual audiences.

Each activity will include time required, materials needed, and facilitation instructions.

Don't see a favorite activity listed? Send us your ideas at heartu@heart.org.



In-Person
Activities



Virtual
Activities

NEW

Team Book Club



1

Format: In Person or Virtual

Materials: Meeting Space or Skype,
Selected Book/Book Summary

Time Required: 1 hour

Select, read, and discuss a book or book summary with your team. If you want to select an entire book, you can cover a chapter or two every week or month. You can select a theme and have several related book summaries to discuss monthly.

Join Heart U Book Club or contact Heart U to create your own book club for your team

NEW

Group Timeline



2

Format: In-Person or Virtual

Materials: Bulletin Board/Whiteboard, Thumbtacks/Tape, Blank Timeline/Paper/Post-Its

Time Required: 30 mins - 1 hour

On a bulletin board or other surface which accepts thumbtacks/tape (or create on whiteboard), create a blank timeline. The timeline should start as far back as the oldest member on your team was born (if they choose to disclose) or when the company was founded, whichever came first. Mark each year on the timeline. Then, using narrow strips of paper or post-its, write down important dates for the company (e.g. founded, merged, changed names, incorporated, new product) and add it to the correct spot on the timeline.

Give your team members four slips of paper, and ask them to mark down four important moments in their life. Let them pin them to the timeline.

This exercise helps show, in a visual way, the different generations and experiences of your team. It leads well into talking about cultural and generational differences and the effects that has on how people work and communicate. It is also an opportunity for team members to learn more about each other.

NEW

Find the Common Thread



#

3

Format: In Person or Virtual (If able to break into groups)

Materials: Paper/Pens

Time Required: 30 mins

Before your regular staff meeting, break your team into groups. Instruct the groups to find out one commonality among themselves. It might be a hobby or an interest they all have, or the same favorite genre of music or favorite food. Once they discover a commonality they can agree on, they create a list of what they like about that topic, why they associate themselves with that topic, why it's important to them, and fun qualities of associating with that topic. Then, the groups come together to announce to the rest of the groups who they are. For example, they might be "Roller Coaster Buffs" or "Jane Austenites." For the rest of the regular staff meeting (or the day, if you're daring), group members can act out the qualities they listed. The Roller Coaster Buffs, for example, might periodically raise their arms and holler, or the Jane Austenites might rephrase all of their speech to co-workers as quotes from Jane Austen books. At the completion of the meeting (or day), talk about how people managed to find a commonality, and the process it took to dig it up.

Salt and Pepper



4

Format: In Person

Materials: Tape, a pen, a small piece of paper for each employee and a list of well-known pairs (think peanut butter and jelly, Mario and Luigi, or salt and pepper).

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Write one half of each pair on the sheets of paper (Mario on one piece, Luigi on another, and so on). Tape one paper to each person's back, then have everyone mingle and try to figure out the word on their back. The rule: they can only ask each other yes or no questions. Once they figure out their word, they need to find the other half of their pair. When they find each other, have them sit down and find three things they have in common while the rest of the team continues.

Silence is Golden



5

Format: In-Person

Materials: Colored Markers, 1 Piece of Flipchart Paper
Per Group

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Divide the group into teams of 4-6 participants. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and some markers. Have each team draw a floor plan or a picture of the ideal work environment for the group. Money is no object, so be creative and have fun with this one! Participants may not talk to anyone while planning or drawing. After 10 minutes, have each team share their drawing with the group.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What did the drawings have in common?
- 2) How did you communicate with each other?
- 3) What implications does this have for us back on the job?

Marshmallow Spaghetti Tower



6

Format: In Person

Materials: 20 sticks of uncooked spaghetti, 1 roll of masking tape, 1 yard of string, and 1 marshmallow for every team.

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Using just these supplies, which team can build the tallest tower? There's a catch: the marshmallow has to be at the very top of the spaghetti tower, and the whole structure has to stand on its own (that means no hands or other objects supporting it!) for five seconds.

Minefield



7

Format: In Person

Materials: An empty room or hallway, and a collection of common office items

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Use boxes, office chairs, water bottles, etc. to create an obstacle course of "mines" within your empty space. Divide the group into pairs, where one partner is blindfolded. The other must guide that person from one end of the course to another without setting off any mines. The "guide" cannot enter the course and must only use verbal instructions to get their partner through. Depending on the number of people you have and how difficult you want this activity to be, you can vary the number of pairs trying to complete the course at the same time so that pairs have to work harder to listen to each other and communicate clearly.

Company Coat of Arms



8

Format: In Person

Materials: Paper, pens, markers

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Have teams create a team, market, or department coat of arms. In the first space, draw something that represents a recent achievement. In the second space, draw something that reflects the group's values. In the third space, draw something that represents where you see the group going in the future. Post the finished coat of arms in your office.

Memory Wall



9

Format: In Person

Materials: Post-It notes or a whiteboard

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Write a few general work-related topics on the white board or on sticky notes posted to the wall: "My first day," "Teamwork," "Work travel," etc. Gather your team together and have everyone choose one of the topics and share a story from their time with your company to laugh and bond over shared experiences. Or, pass out sticky notes and have everyone write down positive memories of working together or special team accomplishments. They can use words or pictures to record these memories. Then have everyone share their memory and post it on the wall, forming a positive memory cloud.

Wrong-Handed Picture



10

Format: In-Person

Materials: Paper and Pens for Each Participant

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Give pen and paper to each participant. Give the participants 6 minutes to draw a picture of something in their workspace. Participants must draw with their non-dominant hand. Have the participants exchange their pictures with someone else. This participant will label the picture according to what they think it is and give it back to the artist.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How many guessed correctly?
- 2) How did it feel to use your “wrong” hand?
- 3) How did those feelings affect your drawing?
- 4) What implications does this have for us back on the job?

Whose Office is it Anyway?



11

Format: Virtual

Materials: Skype (Use File Sharing Tool)

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Before a virtual meeting, have your team members send a photo of their home offices, and then have everyone guess whose workspace is whose. Keep the game going with photos of everyone’s coffee mugs, desktop backgrounds, or the view outside their window.

Spin a Tale



12

Format: Virtual

Materials: Skype Chat

Time Required: 10-15 mins

During a virtual meeting, make up the first line of a story. Then ask team members to take turns and add each subsequent line until a whole plot develops! Let the story go along on its own path and deviations. The idea is to have fun and help the team practice thinking on their feet.

Charades or Catchphrase via Skype



13

Format: Virtual

Materials: Skype (Video Chat)

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Divide your group into two teams, and play classic party games like Charades or Catchphrase via video call. You can send everyone the link to an online Charades or Catchphrase ideas generator that will provide word prompts for you.