Indoor Team Building Activities



Broadly speaking, team building activities can be divided into two categories - indoor and outdoor activities.

Indoor activities, because of where they’re conducted, typically have a very different character than outdoor activities. You’ll usually conduct these activities during regular office hours or at most, a weekend. If you’re at a team retreat, your activities will largely be outdoors, not within the confines of some conference room.

Because of this, indoor activities tend to be more serious. The aim is the same - to improve communication, trust and collaboration skills - but they have a decidedly formal tilt.

Let’s look at a few indoor team building activities you can use in your next team meeting:

1. Code of Conduct

A simple but meaningful activity that sets the tone for an event and builds consensus on shared values. Teams list what matters to them on a whiteboard. Perfect for the start of an event or workshop.

**Number of participants:**10-30

**Duration:**30+ min

**Objectives:**Build mutual trust, establish group values.

**How to play**

1. On a whiteboard, write down the words "Meaningful" and "Pleasant"

2. Ask everyone in the group to shout out what will make this workshop meaningful and pleasant. Alternatively, ask them to write their ideas on sticky notes.

3. Record each participant's suggestion in the form of a [mind map](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map).

4. For each suggestion, ensure that all participants have the same understanding of the idea. If not, change the suggestion until it has consensus from all participants.

5. Go through each suggested item and ask participants how they would ensure that the idea is carried out during the workshop. Record these on the whiteboard in sticky notes.

6. All ideas mutually agreed on as being "pleasant" and "meaningful" make up the Code of Conduct for the group. The group has the responsibility to uphold this code through the remainder of the workshop.

**Strategy**

For any team building activity to be successful, the team has to have a few common values and beliefs about what makes a successful team meeting. Establishing these values early in the workshop/team meeting can make the rest of the workshop run much smoother.

2. Campfire Stories

A classic activity that inspires storytelling and improves team bonding. Teams gather in a circle and share their workplace experiences. Along the way, they learn things about each other and relive old memories.

**Number of participants:** 6-20

**Duration:**45 minutes

**Objective:**Informal training, encourage participants to share, and establish common experiences

**How to play**

1. Create a set of trigger words that can kickstart a storytelling session. Think of words like "first day", "work travel", "partnership", "side project", etc. Add them to sticky notes.

2. Divide a whiteboard into two sections. Post all sticky notes from above on one section of the whiteboard.

3. Ask a participant to pick out one trigger word from the sticky notes and use it to share an experience (say, about his/her first day at the company). Shift the chosen sticky note to the other side of the whiteboard.

4. As the participant is relating his/her experience, ask others to jot down words that remind them of similar work-related stories. Add these words to sticky notes and paste them on the whiteboard.

5. Repeat this process until you have a "wall of words" with interconnected storie**s.**

**Strategy**

Storytelling is at the heart of the community experience. It is also how information gets passed on informally. A storytelling session focused on work-related stories can get a large group to loosen up and share their experiences.



It can also act as an informal training session with work experiences passing from one member to another.



3. Memory Wall

A physical activity that establishes and re-lives the team’s shared memories. Teams sketch their shared memories with each other and place them on a wall. The wall remains up throughout the event, working as a focal point of the team’s camaraderie.

**Number of participants:** 6-50

**Duration:** 45-90 minutes

**Objective:**Build camaraderie between team members, foster relationships

**How to play**

1. Give each participant sheets of paper, markers, and tape.

2. Ask each participant to survey the room. Take 15 minutes to write down positive memories of shared experiences and moments while working together.

3. Once participants have a few memories listed, ask them to draw a few of these memories on fresh sheets of papers. The drawings can be abstract renditions of the "memory scene". They can involve partners who've shared the memory to create this drawing. Give them up to 30 minutes to do this.

4. Once the time is up, ask participants to tape their memory drawings to the wall.

5. Ask for volunteers to approach the wall and expand on the memories they just taped on the wall with the entire group.

**Strategy**

A visual "memory wall" creates a welcoming environment and reaffirms the positive relationships between team members. Rendering each memory - individually or in groups - as a drawing adds much-needed levity and camaraderie to the whole exercise.

4. Low-Tech Social Network

Map the connections between team members on a whiteboard. Teams create their “avatars”, then draw lines to show how they know other team members. This can work great as an ice-breaker at events where teams don’t know each other well.

**Number of participants:** 5-50

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Objective:**Introduce participants to each other and establish relationships between them

**How to play**

1. Give participants markers, index cards, and tape. If possible, use markers of different colors.

2. Ask participants to draw their "avatar" on the index card - their "profile picture" on this social network, so to say. Add their names and positions to each card as well.

3. Stick each avatar card on a large whiteboard. Make sure to leave plenty of room between each card.

4. Ask each participant to draw lines to avatar cards of people they already know in the room. Also, specify how they know them ("[worked on a project together](https://www.workamajig.com/blog/team-collaboration)", "lunch buddies", "went to the same college").

**Strategy**

This "social network" works best when you're dealing with people who don't know each other. Establishing the relationships between them will break the ice. It will also help others map connections between participants for the remainder of the event.

5. Spectrum Mapping

Map the diversity of perspectives on a topic by organizing them into a spectrum. This can unearth innovative ideas and show the diversity of opinions within a team. It can also encourage people with unconventional views who otherwise won’t speak up to participate.

**Number of participants:**5-15

**Duration:**30-60 minutes

**Objective:** Express views and share diverse views

**How to play**

1. Start by identifying a few key topics on which you want insight and opinions from the participants.

2. Write down a topic in the center of a whiteboard. Then ask participants to write down their opinions and perspectives on the topic on sticky notes. Post these notes on either side of the topic along a horizontal line

3. Once everyone has chimed in, work with the group to arrange the notes as a "range" of ideas. Group similar ideas together to the left. Place outlying ideas to the right.

4. Continue doing this until you've arranged all ideas as a "spectrum" with most popular ideas to the extreme left, the least popular ideas on the extreme right.

**Strategy**

Building a spectrum map tells you the diversity of your team's views about a topic. If you choose a topic that's relevant to your business, this little team building exercise can reveal an astonishing amount of unconventional thinking.

6. Back of the Napkin

Draw the solution to a problem on the [back of a napkin](https://hbr.org/2008/09/solving-problems-with-your-pen.html), like all entrepreneurs of legend. Teams will have to work together and solve problems creatively for this game to work.

**Number of participants:** 6-24, divided into teams of 3-4

**Duration:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:**Promote unconventional thinking and teamwork

**How to play**

1. Come up with a bunch of open ended problems. These could be related to your business, an imaginary product, an environmental problem, etc.

2. Divide all players into teams of 2 to 4 players - basically, what you would see in a team of startup co-founders. Ideally, these would be people who've never met or worked together.

3. Give each team a folded napkin and a pen.

4. Ask the teams to draw a solution to the problem as a flow chart/sketch/graph. Evaluate all solutions and pick the best one.

*Optional:*Offer prizes to the best solution

**Strategy**

The "back of the napkin" is where so many great product and startup ideas first came into being. This simple team building exercise replicates this tiny canvas, giving participants something fun to do while promoting teamwork and outside-the-box thinking.

7. Magazine Story

Who wouldn’t want to be featured on a magazine cover?

In this activity, each team has to create an imaginary magazine cover story about a successful project or business achievement. They have to get the right images, come up with headlines, formulate quotes, etc.

A great exercise in creativity that can also inspire your team to think bigger.

**Number of participants:** Any

**Duration:**60-90 minutes

**Objective:** Visualize future success, motivate team members and encourage them to think big

**How to play**

1. The goal of this game is simple: get players to create a magazine cover story about your company or project (choose either). The players don't have to write the complete story; they only have to write the headlines and create images, quotes and sidebars.

2. Divide participants into teams of 3-6 players. Give them markers, pens, and anything else they'll need to create a fictional magazine cover.

3. Create several templates for different elements of the magazine story. This should include: a) magazine cover, b) cover story headline, c) quotes from leaders and team members, d) sidebars about project highlights, and e) images.

4. Distribute these templates to each team. Ask them to create a magazine story, filling in each template and focusing on the project or business.

5. Choose the best magazine cover.

*Optional:* Offer a prize for the most creative magazine cover.

**Strategy**

Seeing your project or business' success featured in a magazine is the high-point of any organization. This creative exercise helps your team members think big and visualize their future success. It can also be a powerful motivational tool.

8. Shark Tank

Join Mark Cuban and company as you present your own product pitch in front of a mock "[Shark Tank](https://abc.go.com/shows/shark-tank)" of investors. People love this pitch format and it gives team members to work together and be entrepreneurial. You also get to play ‘investor’ and pick the best pitch.

**Number of participants:**Up to 24 people, split into teams of 2-6 participants

**Duration:** 90 minutes

**Objective:**Promote unconventional thinking, collaboration, entrepreneurship and teamwork

**How to play**

1. This team building activity is based off the eponymous TV show. The objective is the same: teams pitch mock products in front of a group of "Sharks" (usually senior team members) to secure investments.

2. Divide participants into teams of 2-6 people. Ask them to come up with an imaginary product and develop a pitch for it. This pitch must be professional and include:

* Brand name
* Brand slogan
* Business plan
* Marketing plan
* Financial data (predicted sales, market size, profit margins, etc.)

If people have difficulty figuring out the pitch requirements, you can play them clips from the Shark Tank show.

3. Choose 3-4 people to be the "Sharks". Give them imaginary backgrounds ("*X is the founder of ABC Clothing and the owner of a major NFL team*"). You can also give them an imaginary pool of money to invest in pitched ideas.

4. Ask each team to develop their pitch and present it in front of the Sharks. Encourage the Sharks to ask questions as if they're evaluating a real business and parting with their own real cash. If a pitch is promising, the Sharks can invest their mock money into the business.

5. The team that wins the most investment at the end wins.

**Strategy**

Shark Tank is one of the most popular shows on television. Getting your team to participate in your own version of this show can stimulate entrepreneurship and big thinking. Since all players have to work in teams and divide duties to be successful, it will also promote teamwork and collaboration.

9. Make Your Own Movie

What better way to stimulate creativity than to get your team to make their own little movie? This fun activity can be done indoors or outdoors. It requires some equipment - cameras, tripods, and microphones - but your team will love it.

After all, who doesn't love movies?

**Number of participants:**Any

**Duration**: 2-8 hours (change as needed). Alternatively, make it a full day event

**Objective:**Promote creativity, teamwork, collaboration and help people work with large teams

**How to play**

1. Procure the equipment - a good camera (DSLR cameras will do), shotgun microphones, tripods, and a laptop loaded with film editing cameras.

2. Divide participants into large teams (minimum 8 people). Ask each team to divide responsibilities (screenwriter, actors, camera operator, director, etc.).

3*. Optional:* Introduce a theme. If that seems too constricting, ask teams to pick their own topic/theme.

4. Ask teams to write scripts for their own 5-7 minute movie. As a rule of the thumb, a single script page translates into a minute of film.

5. Teams will create movies based on the script, borrowing equipment as necessary.

6. Screen all finished movies at the end of the exercise, awarding prizes to the top picks.

**Strategy**

Making a movie is an exercise in teamwork. You need every part of the "studio" working together seamlessly to pull off a successful movie. Since you're working in a limited environment, teams will also have to be creative to get the narrative and effects they want. This can promote lateral, unconventional thinking.

10. Radio Play

Making movies is fun, but what if some team members are shy and would rather not appear on camera? Or if you don't have the equipment or the expertise to make and edit movies?

In such situations, you have an alternative - creating a radio play.

This evergreen format offers a way for teams to work together and express their creativity without the hassle of working with film equipment. It also supports smaller teams and can be done in smaller rooms.

**Number of participants:** Any

**Duration:**Up to to 2 hours. Keep it shorter if you want time management to be a learning outcome.

**Objective:** Promote creativity, teamwork, collaboration and time management.

**How to play**

1. Procure the equipment - notebooks, pens, markers, flip chart papers, microphones, and props for making different sound effects.

2. Divide participants into equally sized teams of 3-12 people.

3. Set up a theme or let teams choose their own.

4. Give teams 60 minutes to plan and write the play, 15-20 minutes to perform it. Since the play is for radio, it's audio only.

5. Strategy each play and award the best-reviewed play a prize.

**Strategy**

The radio play is a much more approachable creative format than making movies or actual plays. Since it only requires voice acting, people are generally more willing to participate. At the same time, putting together a successful radio play requires collaboration, teamwork and lots of creative thinking.

11. Office Trivia

Sometimes, you need a quick activity to break the ice and get people involved in an event. Asking relevant "trivia" questions about your workplace works well in such situations. This game doesn't require any equipment or significant preparation. It can also be held indoors or outdoors, with small teams or large teams, making it a flexible option for team building.

**Number of participants:**Any

**Duration:**30-60 minutes

**Objective:**Get people engaged and improve team bonding

**How to play**

1. Come up with a list of trivia questions related to your place of work. Questions like "What does the poster in the cafeteria say?", "How many people named 'John' work in the IT department?", "How many people work in the accounting department?", etc.

2. Write all questions and their answers on index cards.

3. Ask questions to the whole group and solicit answers out loud.

4. The participant who gets the most answers right wins at the end.

*Optional:* To make it more competitive, consider dividing participants into teams and adding 'buzzers' for each question.

**Strategy**

Your workplace is the one thing common to all members of the team. The objects and people in your office tie your team together. A game like this is not only fun and easy to run, but also highlights the things common to everyone in the room, improving team bonding.

**12. Silver Lining**

Recollecting memories is a good way to get team members to bond with each other. But not everyone on a team will have the same perspectives of a memory, especially if it's a negative one. Pointing out the silver linings in a negative memory can help shift perspectives, improve morale and help people see things from their team members' perspectives

**Number of participants:** 4-12 people, divided into teams of at least 2 people

**Duration:**30-60 minutes

**Objective:** Reframe experiences and shift perspectives

**How to play**

1. Divide the participants into teams of two or more people who've had a shared work experience (such as working on a project together).

2. Ask Team Member A to share a negative experience they had working together with the rest of the group.

3. Team Member B then shares the same experience but focuses on the positive aspects of the experience, aka the "silver lining".

4. Team Member B then shares his/her own negative experience, and Team Member A shares the positive aspects of it from his/her perspective.

**Strategy**

A "negative" experience is seldom exactly that. Often, it's a matter of perspective. By sharing a negative experience, then reframing it in a positive light, you can shift perspectives. Sharing experiences also promotes team bonding and helps build deeper relationships.

**13. Odd Couples**

On any team, you'll have people with different personalities. But sometimes, these different personalities actually have things in common. Getting these team members to appreciate their differences and similarities can improve team bonding.

**Number of participants:** 6-20 people

**Duration:** 45-60 minutes

**Objective:**Improve team bonding and communication skills

**How to play**

1. Create a list of odd pairs of objects that, for some reason, go well together. Like "Peanut butter & jelly", "chocolate & coffee", "salt & pepper", etc.

2. Write down the names of objects from each pair on separate sheets of paper.

3. Tape a sheet of paper to a participant's back. Do this for all participants. Try to tape opposing pairs on people with opposing personalities, though this is isn't necessary.

4. Ask participants to mingle with the group. Their objective is to figure out what's written on their backs. The trick is: they can only ask yes/no questions ("Do I add flavor to food? Do I make the food spicy?").

5. Once participants figure out what's written on their backs, they have to find the other half of their pair.

6. After they've found their pairs, participants have to find three things they share in common with their opposing pair.

**Strategy**

In any team building event, one of your biggest challenges is bringing different people together. An exercise like this can give participants a reason to sit down and share experiences with people they might not mingle with otherwise. The focus on yes/no questions also improves communication skills.

14. Truth and Lies

A simple game to get people to open up. Teams gather together in an intimate environment. Each team member says three truths and one lie about himself. Team members have to guess the lie out of the four statements.

**Number of participants:** 4-16

**Duration:**30 minutes

**Objective:** Break the ice and get people involved

**How to play**

1. Ask the players to sit in a circle.

2. Each player has to think up three truths and one lie about himself.

3. Each player then gets up in the center of the circle and says four statements about himself (three truths, one lie).

4. The rest of the group has to guess which of the statements is a truth, which one is a lie.

5. The process repeats for all other players.

**Strategy**

There is no competitive element to this game. Instead, it's designed to get people to open up and get to know each other better. The opportunity to lie can also get some hilariously outrageous statements from players, which further improves the group's mood.

Outdoor Team Building Activities

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Outdoor team building activities have a decidedly different flavor than their indoor counterparts. For one, you usually do these activities at team retreats. The mood at these retreats is more casual and relaxed than that in an indoor weekend workshop.

Since everyone is in a relaxed mood, the activities you choose must utilize and amplify this energy.

Consequently, outdoor team building activities generally tend to be more fun and active. The business fades into the background as you focus more on helping the team come together and having a good time.

Here are some outdoor activities you can try at your next team retreat:

1. Back-to-Back Drawing

This fast, fun activity is a quick take on Pictionary. You can do it outdoors or indoors, though the physical nature of this activity makes it more suitable for relaxed outdoors environments. Use it as an interlude between longer activities or at the very start of the event to get people in a relaxed state.

**Number of participants:**6-20 people

**Duration:**30 minutes

**Objective:** Improve communication skills

**How to play**

1. Head to your favorite stock photography site and print a number of vector shapes on separate sheets of paper. These can be shapes of signs, objects, or even abstract shapes. Think "Statue of Liberty", "Formula 1 car", etc.

2. Divide participants into teams of two people each. Make them sit back-to-back.

3. Team Member A gets a pen and a sheet of paper. Team Member B is given one of the printed shapes.

4. The objective of the game is for the Team Member A to draw the shape using only verbal instructions from Team Member B. B cannot state what the object is; he/she can only describe its uses or give instructions on how to draw it.

5. Give each team 2 minutes to draw the shape.

6. Teams that get the most shapes right win.

**Strategy**

This game focuses on communication skills - giving and listening to instructions. At the end of each game, evaluate what went wrong, what went right while communicating. This is not only great for getting people involved, but it can also highlight flaws in how your team members communicate verbally.

2. Blind draw

This activity is similar to back-to-back drawing, except that it focuses on teams instead of individuals. The goal is the same: draw an object using only verbal instructions. Teamwork and communication are vital to be good at this game.

**Number of participants:**6-20 people

**Duration:**30-45 minutes

**Objective:** Focus on teamwork and communication skills in a group setting

**How to play**

1. Get a flipchart, markers and a bunch of everyday objects (such as a lampshade, bicycle, etc.). Alternatively, print pictures of objects. This game works best with more unobvious objects (say, a trampoline vs a coin).

2. Divide all participants into teams of 4-6 people.

3. Ask each team to pick one person to be the "artist". Ask the artist to take his place next to the flipchart.

4. Face the team away from the flipchart and give them an object from your pile.

5. The team will then instruct its artist on how to draw the object based on verbal instructions alone. They can describe the object but not state its name. The artist can't see the object at any time, nor can the team see what the artist is drawing. Each team gets 3 minutes for a drawing.

6. The team whose drawing comes closest to the actual object wins.

**Strategy**

To be good at this game, teams have to a) delegate effectively (i.e. pick the right artist), and b) communicate well (within the team as well as between the team and artist). In your evaluation, focus on how teams chose their artists and whether they were able to pick a team leader for relaying instructions (if yes, then how).

3. Body of Words

This is a simple, fun game that gets everyone involved physically. The goal is for your team to create letters and words with their bodies alone. It's a great way to get people to loosen up and have fun at a team retreat.

**Number of participants:**8-24 people

**Duration:**30 minutes

**Objective:** Learn planning, [creative thinking](https://www.workamajig.com/blog/in-house-creative-team-traits) and cooperation

**How to play**

1. Find a wide open area without any obstacles.

2. Divide participants into teams of 4-8 people. Each team chooses one team leader.

3. Write down a bunch of words with the one letter less than as the number of people in each team (i.e. if there are 5 people per team, pick words like "book", "cats", etc.) on index cards.

4. Pick a word at random. Each team then has to make the word with their bodies alone. Each team member can contort his/her shape to form a letter, which can then form words. The team leaders can direct their teams.

5. Set a time limit of 5-7 minute for each word.

6. The team that makes the word the fastest wins.

7. In each round, ask the team to choose a different leader.

**Strategy**

One of the challenges of organizing team retreats is getting people to loosen up. A physical activity that engages the entire team is a good way to get people to relax. Picking a leader and collaborating to create different letters also helps build leadership, planning and cooperation.

4. Hole in Many

Another simple, fun game that gets the entire team involved in something physical. Essentially, the team has to balance a tennis ball on a tarpaulin with holes cut into it randomly.

Being good at this game requires the entire team to coordinate and work together.

**Number of participants:**8-24 people

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Objective:**Learn teamwork

**How to play**

1. Grab a piece of tarpaulin and a few tennis balls. Cut a hole randomly into the tarp.

2. Divide the group into equally sized teams of 4-8 people.

3. Ask each team to hold the tarp stretched out between them.

4. Drop a ball onto the tarp. The team has to hold the tarp as long as possible without the tennis falling through the hole.

5. The team that holds the tarp for the longest time wins.

6. If a single hole is too easy, cut more holes into the tarp. You can also grab additional tarps and get all teams to do this activity at the same time, timing their performance along the way.

**Strategy**

While there is something to learn from this team building activity - physical and verbal cooperation - it's best suited for getting people involved at the start of an event. It's fun for everyone and simple enough that anyone can play it, regardless of age or fitness level.

5. Buckets & Balls

This game is picked right from your favorite old-school game shows. Teams compete against each other to move balls from one bucket to another...without using their hands or arms.

This limitation and the timed nature of the game creates a lot of opportunities for fun mishaps. Plus, to win, players will have to work together as a team and delegate responsibilities.

**Number of participants**: 8-24 people

**Duration:**20 minutes

**Objective:**Learn teamwork, task management and [leadership](https://www.workamajig.com/blog/the-importance-of-creative-leadership)

**How to play**

1. Set up your field of play. Use masking tape, chalk or cones to create separate "Start" and "Finish" lines about 10-12 feet apart. Place buckets for each team at either end of these start/finish lines. Fill the buckets behind the finish line with tennis balls.

2. Divide players into equally-sized teams. Each team must choose a "handler". Handlers are the only people who can touch the balls with their hands.

3. Ask the teams to take their place behind the start line. Handlers must stay behind the start line at all times. Team members must retrieve balls from the finish line bucket and get them to their team's handler *without*using their hands or arms.

4. The handler can then drop the balls into the team's empty bucket. If anyone apart from the handler touches the ball, he/she is immediately disqualified and must leave the field.

5. Start the game with a 5-minute time limit. All teams play at the same time (which creates additional chaos and makes communication even more important). Team members have to work with each other to somehow pick up balls from one bucket and get them to their handlers.

6. The team that has the most balls at the end of 5 minutes wins.

**Strategy**

The "no hands, no arms" rule makes this simple game much more difficult and emphasizes the need for teamwork. The introduction of handlers also forces teams to delegate authority.

6. Photo Finish

A quick and easy game that can be played with small teams with zero equipment. Participants have to walk across a finish line at exactly the same time in a "photo finish". Great for testing coordination. And for getting a frame-worthy picture for your office.

**Number of participants:** 4-20 people

**Duration:**20 minutes

**Objective:** Focus on communication and coordination

**How to play**

1. Create a straight 'finish line' using chalk, masking tape or rope.

2. Ask all participants to cross the finish line at exactly the same time, i.e. a "photo finish". Participants will have to coordinate with each other to pull this off.

3. Take a photograph every time they cross the finish line to see if it qualifies as a photo finish.

4. For added difficulty, ask the participants to walk or run across the finish line in a photo finish.

**Strategy**

This game sounds deceptively easy, but it actually requires a lot of coordination. For a true photo finish, players will have to work very closely together. They will also need to informally elect a 'leader' who can lead the coordination efforts.

7. Build Bridges, Not Walls

Two teams build separate halves of a bridge using the materials provided. Once finished, they have to work together to make the halves fit. A great game for building collaboration and creativity skills.

**Number of participants:**8-20 people - at least enough to create two teams

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Objective:** Build creative thinking, communication, collaboration and problem solving skills

**How to play**

1. Grab items that can be used to build a bridge, such as cardboard, Lego, building blocks, straws, paper, tape, rulers, etc.

2. Divide the participants into two equally sized teams. Separate them into two different sections of the playing area such that they can't see what the other team is doing (use a sheet to make the separation if you have to).

3. Ask each team to build one-half of a bridge. A team cannot see what the other is doing. They can, however, communicate verbally and exchange ideas about the bridge design.

4. Give the teams free access to whatever materials they need to build the bridge.

5. Each team gets 10 minutes to come up with an idea and a sketch for the bridge. They get an additional 30 minutes to build the actual bridge. The teams can communicate verbally across the room throughout this period.

6. After 30 minutes, ask the two teams to meet together and see whether their bridges were actually similar or not.

Optional: If you have a larger group, you can make this competitive by dividing the group into 2 (or more) pairs of teams. The team-pair that gets closest to building a complete bridge wins.

**Strategy**

Building bridges is fun, but when you have to build only one half and ensure that the opposing team does the same, it brings in interesting dynamics. Teams have to communicate clearly through verbal instructions to be successful.

They also have to be good at solving problems, teamwork and collaborating on a design - again, without actually seeing each other (something that happens a lot in modern remote offices as well).

8. Team Jigsaw

A deceptively simple game. Teams have to complete a jigsaw puzzle within the specified time limit. Except there's one catch: some of the puzzle pieces are with the opposing team. To successfully complete their puzzle, the teams are forced to work together.

**Number of participants:** 8-20 people divided into two teams.

**Duration:**30 minutes

**Objective:**Build collaboration, problem solving and communication skills

**How to play**

1. Grab two puzzles. Mix in some pieces from Puzzle A with pieces from Puzzle B. Place them into two separate boxes.

2. Divide the group into two teams. If there are more people, you can create additional teams (don't forget to split the puzzle to match the number of teams).

3. Hand each team a box with their respective puzzles. The teams will start out thinking that they only have to create their own puzzle.

4. Once they start working, however, the teams will realize that there are some missing (and some extra) pieces. Ask the teams to communicate clearly with each other about this situation. Eventually, it will dawn on them that they have to work together to solve the puzzle.

5. Teams can exchange puzzle pieces but only one at a time. Ask them to work together until the puzzle is solved within the specified time limit (20-30 minutes, depending on the complexity of the puzzle).

*Optional:* For added difficulty, divide the teams into separate rooms such that they can't see each other.

**Strategy**

The teams start out thinking it's a conventional time-based puzzle challenge. The realization that they have to work together to complete their puzzles always takes everyone by surprise. In the process, the teams learn how to work together, communicate well and solve problems.

9. Sneak-a-Peak

In this building-focused game, teams have to create a copy of a pre-built structure based on a "sneak peak". Teams will have to value teamwork, communication and problem solving to succeed.

Plus, it involves Legos. And who doesn't love Legos?

**Number of participants:** 4-20 people divided into two teams.

**Duration:**30 minutes

**Objective:** Focus on teamwork and communication

**How to play**

1. Use Lego pieces to create a structure - something that is complex yet possible to replicate. Make sure that you have enough remaining Lego pieces to make two similar copies of the structure. Also make sure that no one can see the structure (ideally, place it in a separate room).

2. Divide the players into two teams.

3. One player from each team can look at the structure for 10 seconds. After this, the player has to return to his/her team and instruct them on how to build the structure for 25 seconds.

4. Each team takes 1 minute to build the structure as per the instructions. After a minute, another player can take a "sneak peak" at the structure for 10 seconds and relay the instructions for 25 seconds.

5. This process continues until everyone in the team has had a chance to look at the structure.

6. The team that builds the structure first, wins.

**Strategy**

To be successful at this team building activity, teams have to communicate really well. Each player who looks at the structure has to relay instructions clearly to his teammates. Teams also have to have some standards for consistency in instructions for a successful build. Without a clear Strategy and sound communication, teams will struggle at this game.

10. Tied Together

A great, easy game for building relationships and getting people to work together. Teammates are tied together by the wrist and must complete a series of simple tasks. To be successful, everyone has to collaborate closely and communicate well.

**Number of participants:** 4-16 people

**Duration:**30 minutes

**Objective:** Focus on teamwork, build relationships and communicate clearly

**How to play**

1. Grab shoe laces, zip ties, cloth strips or anything that can be used to tie two people at the wrists/ankles comfortably.

2. Ask all players to form a circle, facing inwards. Ask them to place their arms at their sides. Place all necessary items for completing the tasks in the center of the circle.

3. Use shoe laces or cloth strips to tie each person's wrists to his/her neighbor's until the entire group is tied together.

4. Now ask the team to complete a series of tasks from the objects placed in the circle. Example tasks include making a Lego structure, wrapping a present, building a bridge, pour a glass of water, etc.

5. Since teammates are all tied together, they will have to communicate clearly and collaborate well to complete these seemingly simple tasks. You can add a time limit to increase the difficulty.

*Alternative:* Tie everyone at the ankles instead of the wrists. Ask them to complete some physical tasks such as picking up objects, crossing a maze (made with cones), transfer tennis balls from one bucket to another. For added difficulty, tie people at BOTH the ankles and the wrists.

**Strategy**

Simple tasks become harder and some harder tasks become easier when you're forced to work so closely with your teammates. Focus on the collaborative aspects of this game. Successful teams usually approach each task with a fixed plan and delegate authority well, choosing leaders and coordinating well.

11. Team Emblem

This creative team building exercise is great for smaller teams. Players are divided into small teams where they must work together to create an emblem, flag or shield for their teams. Besides collaboration and creative thinking, this activity is also great for building a stronger sense of team identity and cohesiveness. Plus, it's flexible enough for any situation or group size.

**Number of participants:** Any

**Duration:** 30-90 minutes

**Objective:** Focus on creative thinking, collaboration and fostering a team identity

**How to play**

1. Grab cardboard, chart paper, markers, crayons, tape or anything else you'll need to draw and paint a team emblem or team shield.

2. Divide players into small teams of 3-4 people each. You can make the team composition the same as your real-life office teams to focus more on the team identity aspects of this activity.

3. Give each team enough time to plan, draw and paint an emblem for their teams. The emblem must represent something the identifies the team and its values. They get 10 minutes for inspiration (they can look up ideas online if they want to), 20-80 minutes to make the emblem.

4. Once the time is up, ask each team to display their emblem. Invite all other teams to give their own interpretation of the emblem. Then the creating team gives their actual interpretation. Repeat the process for all other teams.

**Strategy**

One of the hardest aspects of team building is fostering a sense of identity. A simple team emblem - representing something the team collectively cares about - can help you do that. Teams will have to first build consensus on their collective values, then divide tasks to succeed at this activity.

12. Daredevil

This simple but challenging activity pits two teams against each other. One person on each team is blindfolded. The others in the team then give instructions to the blindfolded person to retrieve objects from the playing area.

Communication skills and trust are vital to succeed at this game.

**Number of participants:**6-24

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Objective:** Build communication skills

**How to play**

1. Set up a play area with several objects like water bottles, shoes, books, etc. around it. The objects must be unique enough that people can differentiate between them by touch alone. Also place a large basket in the center of the play area.

2. Divide the players into two teams. Ensure that the number of objects in the play area is at least twice the number of players on each team (like '12 objects for 5-member teams').

3. Ask the two teams to assemble on opposite ends of the play area. Ask them to choose one volunteer to be blindfolded from their team.

4. Play blindfolds on the volunteers, then call out a random object from the play area for each team.

5. The blindfolded volunteers from each team have to race against a clock (2-3 minutes) to pick up their respective team objects and drop them into the basket in the center of the room. They cannot see or ask questions; they must rely entirely on instructions from their teammates.

6. Teammates cannot name the object; they have to first describe the object, its shape and its intended purpose. Then they have to instruct the volunteer on how to reach the object and get it to the basket.

7. The team that gets its object first into the basket wins the round.

8. Repeat the process until each person in the team has had a chance to be the volunteer.

9. The team that wins the most number of round wins the game.

**Strategy**

The blindfold is one of the simplest, yet most effective tools in any team building exercise. It immediately increases the importance of communication and forces teammates to work together.

This game, because of its focus on verbal instructions, is great for building communication skills. It also requires leadership and decision-making; teammates have to decide who will volunteer and who will offer instructions.

13. Perfect Square

Another blindfold game where team members have to work together to create a perfect square with a rope while completely blindfolded. Communication skills, collaboration and hilariously out of shape squares ensue.

**Number of participants:**4-16 participants

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Objective:** Build communication, leadership and collaboration skills

**How to play**

1. Divide the participants into small teams of 4-6 people.

2. Ask each team to stand in close inward facing circles. Get everyone to hold a rope and place it on the floor such that it forms a circle.

3. Once the rope is on the floor, blindfold everyone on all the teams.

4. The teammates now have to work together to turn the circular rope into a perfect square.

5. Give each team 5-7 minutes for this activity. After this, everyone takes off their blindfolds to see the results of their handiwork. Most teams end up making terribly shaped 'squares', which can be a source of much good-natured humor.

6. If you have the time, run the activity again, exchanging at least one person from each team. You can also get them to make more complex shapes other than squares.

**Strategy**

Making a square from a rope sounds deceptively simple, but it isn't. For a perfect square, team members have to communicate clearly and work together to craft straight, equally-sized edges. They will also have to choose a leader to direct their efforts.

14. Guess the Object

A quick take on dumb charades. One person from the group has to demonstrate an object. The others have to guess what it is. Great for inspiring creativity and getting people to loosen up at the start of an event. Also works great as an interlude between longer activities.

**Number of participants:** Any

**Duration:**10-20 minutes

**Objective:**Inspire creativity

**How to play**

1. Ask one person from the group to volunteer.

2. Show this volunteer a common object (either an actual object or a picture on your phone) such as a lampshade, a computer desk, a kite, etc.

3. The volunteer must now demonstrate the object before the group without speaking. They can use gestures, actions and use their bodies in any way necessary to show what the object is and what it does.

4. The rest of the group has to guess the object out loud - just like dumb charades - within 2-3 minutes.

5. Ask other people to volunteer for the next round and repeat the process.

**Strategy**

As far as team-building activities go, this one is quite simple. It also won't have a lasting impact on the team itself. But it works great as an opener or as a short activity to fill in the gaps. It encourages people to participate, plus it’s easy for everyone regardless of age or enthusiasm. Additionally, it forces people to be creative.

15. Scavenger Hunt

A timeless classic that works in any situation, location or team size. You can run the scavenger hunt indoors or outdoors, keep it short or even a day-long, run it with just a few people or involve an entire department - it's all up to you.

Along the way, your team will learn to appreciate collaboration, communication, leadership and the sheer value of having *fun*!

**Number of participants:** Any

**Duration:**Open

**Objective:** Inspire collaboration, problem solving and teamwork

**How to play**

1. Clarify the purpose of the scavenger hunt. Your choice of activities and participants will vary accordingly. For instance, if you want sales and marketing teams to work better together, you can design activities that force them to collaborate. If you want to ice break new employees, get them to pair up with senior employees, and so on.

2. Create a list of activities. Again, align these with the purpose of the hunt. If you want people to just have a good time, pick activities that are less serious and competitive. If you want people to work well together (especially across departments/teams that don't get along), pick team-focused activities. Use sample activities from sites like [TeamBonding for inspiration](https://www.teambonding.com/program-type/scavenger-treasure-hunts/). You can assign different points to each activity based on its difficulty.

3. Setup the activities, then divide your group into equally-sized teams, taking care to select the right partners based on your target objective.

4. Set aside 20-30 minutes to debrief each team. Leave 60-90 minutes for the actual hunt (change according to the size of the play area).

5. Once the time is up, evaluate which team has the highest points.

**Strategy**

Running a scavenger hunt requires a lot of preparation but the payoff can be big. A good scavenger hunt involves everyone and can force people/teams who don't get along otherwise to work closely. For team-building, few activities come close.

16. Shipwrecked

Your plane has just crashed on a deserted island in the middle of the Pacific. You have just a few minutes to salvage some items from the wreckage before the whole plane burns down. What items will your team choose?

A great activity inspired by classic shipwrecked stories. This one will inspire collaboration and creative problem-solving skills.

**Number of participants:** 8-24

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Objective:**Inspire problem-solving, [leadership](https://www.workamajig.com/blog/project-management-skills-shape), negotiation and collaboration

**How to play**

1. Set up a play area with a number of survival items such as different types of food, water, weapons, knives, tarp, flares, matches, etc. You don't have to actually buy these items; you can take printouts of pictures on index cards as well.

2. Place all of them at one end in the "wreckage" area. Ensure that the quantity of each item is limited such that teams will be forced to barter and collaborate.

3. Divide participants into two teams (or more if you have a lot of participants).

4. The teams have 25 minutes to get items for survival from the wreckage. They also have to rank the items in order of importance.

5. Since some items are vital, but limited (such as water), teams will have to collaborate and barter.

**Strategy**

This seemingly simple game becomes complex when you consider the gravity of the situation. Teams often devolve into chaos when they can't come to a consensus about the importance of each item in a survival setting. Successful teams will choose a leader and plan their procurement process carefully. They will also have to negotiate with other teams to get objects they want.

Remote Team Building Activities



Teamwork is a massive challenge for any remote team. Creating a sense of belonging can be difficult when you don’t even share the same workspace.

Most remote-only teams find a half-measured solution by undertaking team retreats once or twice a year.

While these help, the interaction can be awkward and stilted, especially if the team hasn’t had real-life one-on-one meetings in the past (common for growing teams). In fact, remote workers often complain that they spend the first half of any retreat just getting over the social awkwardness.

The antidote to this problem is to participate in regular remote team building activities. These don’t have to be as elaborate as real-world activities. More than anything, they’re meant to bridge the gap between team members and make social interaction easier.

A team that has participated in extensive remote team building activities will not only work better together, but will also find that its real-life interactions are less awkward.

Keeping this in mind, let’s look at a few common remote team building activities:

1. Office Trivia: Remote Team Edition

A take on the office trivia game but for remote teams. Team members have to match the office with its owner from a set of pictures. A nice way to break the ice when running remote events.

**Number of participants:**4-24

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Objective:**Break the ice and get people to know each other better, improve team cohesiveness.

**How to play**

1. Ask all participants to send pictures of their home offices in advance.

2. Get everyone together on group chat.

3. Show a picture of one of the offices chosen at random.

4. The group has to guess which team member the office belongs to.

5. Repeat the process until you've covered all team members.

*Optional*: For future events, ask office trivia questions related to each team member’s office (like *“Whose home office has a giant poster of Elvis Presley?”, “Whose office has white tiles?”*, etc.).

**Strategy**

Team building becomes much harder when you're running a remote team. Sharing something 'intimate', such as a private office, can help remote team members to open up. This simple activity is great for a weekend group chat and can build better team cohesion.

2. Standups Over Coffee

Countless workers across the world start their day with a cup of coffee. Countless workers across the world also start their day with daily standup meetings.

Combine the two and you have this activity - standups over coffee.

The purpose of this team building activity is to replace the daily standup for remote teams. In a real-world office setting, daily standups are short (under 10 minute) sessions where team members talk about what they’re doing today. It’s called a “standup” because that’s exactly what team members do - standup during the meeting.

With this remote team building activity, you’ll ask team members to have a quick phone call or video chat session over their morning cup of joe (or tea). Team members will talk about their day while sipping their favorite beverage.

**Number of participants:**2+

**Duration:**10 minutes

**Objective:**Build camaraderie and improve communication

**How to play:**

1. Ask team members to find a coffee shop near their home or workspace (if they work out of a coworking space). This isn’t necessary, but holding the meeting in a public space naturally limits its duration.

2. Team members hold a group video chat for 10 minutes while inside the coffee shop.

3. Limit chat focus to the top items on each person’s agenda, what they intend to do, and what they need help with.

4. The team leader’s job is to make sure that the conversation is fun but short.

**Strategy**

Having a daily video call while doing something casual can help break the ice between team members. When you see someone every day in an informal setting, you often feel that you *know*them. It’s also great for improving communication and bringing clarity to work schedules.

3. Online Gaming Sessions

This is probably the most accessible remote team building activity there is - a gaming session! From better communication to team bonding, playing your favorite game with your remote coworkers is the perfect way to build up camaraderie.

**Number of participants:**2+

**Duration:**Any

**Objective:**Improve team communication and organization

**How to play:**

1. Poll team members on what their favorite online games are. Build consensus on what games everyone can participate in. Choose something that no team member is particularly skilled in, otherwise it will lead to a skill mismatch. Also try to pair up a new team member with a senior pro to break the ice.

2. Try to choose games that demand teamwork (such as *Counterstrike* or *Fortnite*).

3. Segregate all participants into two (or more) teams. Mix up team members so you get a good general mix of skill and experience (i.e. pair an experienced player with a beginner).

4. Play!

**Strategy**

Some of the most popular online games - *Fortnite, Counterstrike, Starcraft, Dota*, etc. - demand clear communication and organization skills from its players. They also improve camaraderie. Pair up the right people together and you can greatly change how team members feel about each other.

And of course, they’re a lot of fun as well!

4. True Lies (Remote Edition)

It may take its name from Schwarzneggar’s 1994 action-comedy, but this simple game is no laughing matter. It’s particularly effective for breaking the ice in new teams.

The game is easy enough - people gather around and tell three truths and one lie about each other. Others have to guess which of these are truths, which are lies.

First impressions and unfounded misconceptions all get changed along the way.

**Number of participants:**2-20

**Duration:**30 minutes

**Objective:**Build relationships, break the ice in new teams

**How to play:**

1. Bring all the participants into a video conference.

2. Ask each participant to think up three truths and one lie about themselves. If you’re short on time, cut this down to just one truth and one lie. Participants should make sure that the lies aren’t easy to guess (think “I was on the highschool football team”, not “I’m from Mars!”).

3. One participant then says these truths and lies out loud (go by alphabetical order to make things easier).

4. All other team members have to guess which of the four statements is the truth. You can ask team members to hold up a sheet of paper with their guess for everyone to see.

5. Once everyone has guessed, the participant shares the truth. All correct guesses earn 1 point each.

6. The exercise continues with other participants. At the end of the exercise, the team member with the highest number of points wins.

**Strategy**

Remote teams can often work for long periods together without ever really knowing each other. This exercise is meant to help team members understand each other’s histories and backgrounds. It’s particularly helpful for new teams.

5. Share Your Bucket List

If you want to know somebody, you have to first know what they want.

That’s the premise behind this remote team building activity. Participants share their bucket lists, telling each other what matters to them and why. This gives team members a much better understanding of each other’s beliefs and motivations than simple personal trivia.

**Number of participants:**4+

**Duration:**60+ minutes

**Objective:**Break the ice, team bonding

**How to play:**

1. First, ask everyone if they are comfortable sharing their bucket lists (i.e. things they want to do before they *kick the bucket*) publicly. If they are not, exclude them from the activity. If a large number of people fall in this camp, it might be better to choose a different activity.

2. Ask one person to share the top 5 things on his/her bucket list. Also ask them to share why it matters to them and how they plan to achieve it. Keep in mind that bucket lists are meant to be achievable, not outright fantasies (“make a million dollars” is a legitimate goal, “make a trillion dollars” is not).

3. As the participant shares his/her bucket list, team members talk about whether any of the items fall on their bucket list as well, and if yes, why.

4. If two or more participants have the same item on their bucket lists (happens more than you realize), encourage them to team up and find ways to achieve it. A shared goal can be a powerful source of team bonding.

5. Do this for every participant. You don’t have to necessarily follow any structure - just be casual and conversational.

**Strategy**

Bucket lists often reveal deep-seated motivations and passions. If you want team members to *truly*understand each other, sharing these motivations is a great way to break the ice and build real team camaraderie.